Reviews of Doc Sweeney Snares, sE Mics, and Rock Locks

MODERN DRUMMER

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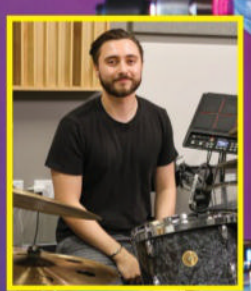
MAY 2024

Russ Kunkel

The Immediate Family and Lyle Lovett



Nic Collins

From Genesis to The Effect

Exclusive Dream Theater Drum Transcription

Dave Abbruzzese

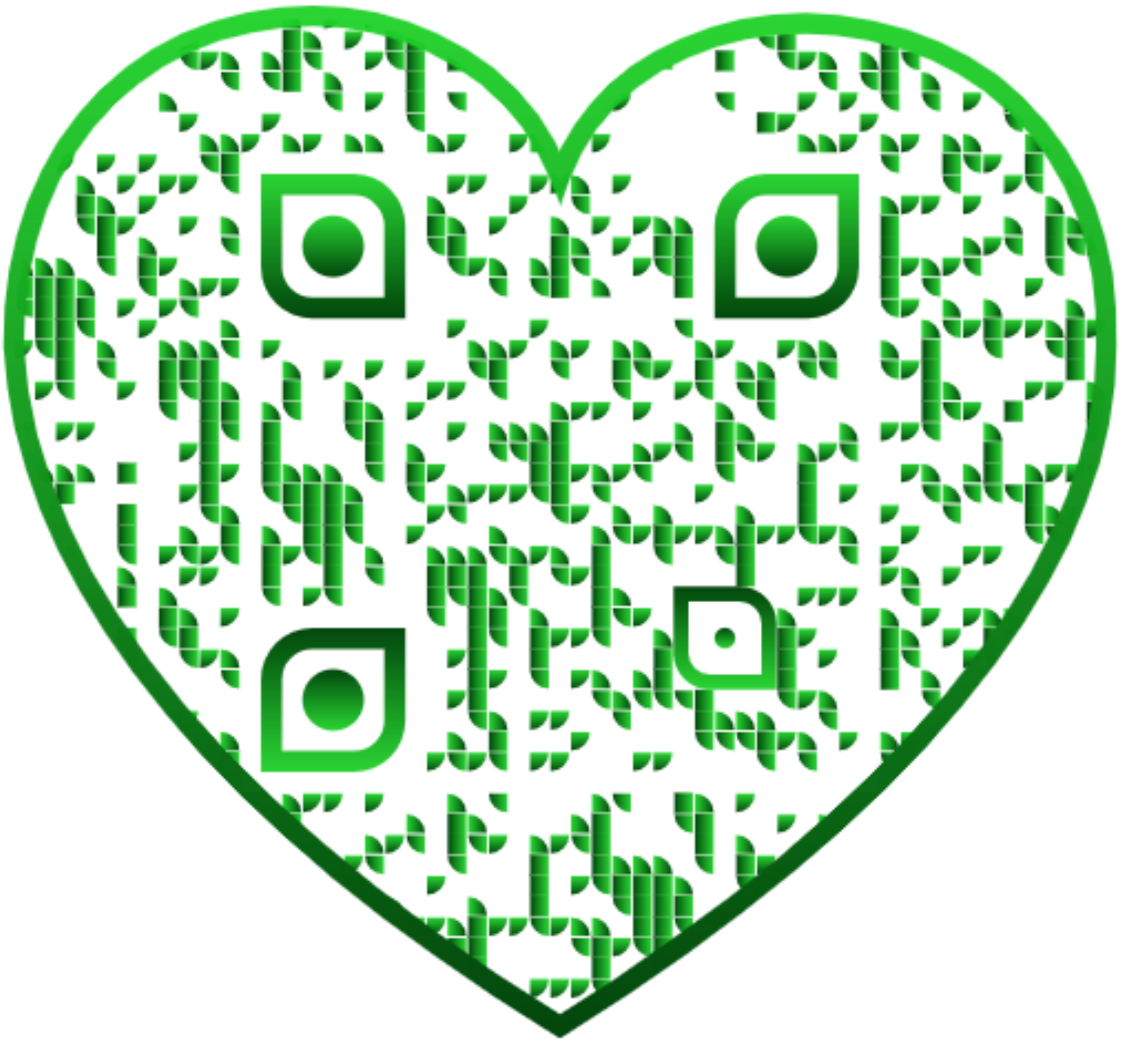
Gets Back to the Woods

Joel Selvin

On Jim Gordon

Learn from:

Erskine, Morello, Rondinelli, Packer, and Lesso



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AN EDITOR'S OVERVIEW

A Drummers Best Friend, Make the Music Smile

For many years it was said that a drummer's best friend is the bassist. I will contend that in *some* musical contexts a drummer's best friend might (as many other drummers have stated) be the rhythm guitarist. However, let's not quibble over that, they're both important. Upon closely reading this month's issue of *Modern Drummer*, you'll find a common link between the featured drummers. What or who is the common link between Russ Kunkel, Nic Collins, and Jim Gordon? The answer... bearded bassist Leland Sklar. It turns out that Sklar was even the impetus for Trev Lukather and Nic Collins getting together and eventually creating the band The Effect.

If you didn't see Leland's amazing YouTube series during Covid lockdown, you were probably the *only* one. Check it out, and smile! If you need a smile and music just isn't enough, check out Sklar's photography book called *Everybody Loves Me*. It features pictures of thousands of musicians and others hilariously giving Leland the classic "one finger salute." For even more smiles, take a look at Lee's smile inducing original drawings and paintings.

There is a reason Russ, Nic, and Jim Gordon (and just about every other drummer from Hal Blaine to Billy Cobham to Vinnie Colaiuta to Questlove) all enjoy playing with Lee Sklar. His bass lines make us drummers smile, and more importantly his bass playing causes the music to smile. And that's very important, especially these days.

I have a theory about Lee's famous beard. If one was to walk the earth smiling from ear to ear all the time, we might think that person was *a little strange*. But if you had a natural curtain (or a big beard) over your face, you could let your smile be slightly hidden and just rely on your personality to make everyone around you smile. No one would think that was *weird*, right? And what more amusing way is there to document all of this happiness but to capture it with a classic (*and sarcastic*) picture of someone giving you the finger.

Leland Sklar and all of the drummers he grooves with, make the music smile, and the world needs more smiles. It doesn't matter what the subject of the song might be, every song needs a groove, and every person needs a smile. So today, find your favorite rhythm guitarist and favorite bassist, and join them in creating a groove that will make the music smile. You'll know it's a great groove when it makes people smile, and those smiling people will make the world a slightly better place.

We can all change the world one groove (and smile) at a time!

Mark Griffith
Editor-in-Chief, Director of Content

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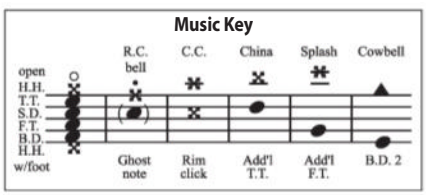

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Tonda's PanAfrican Kit

This month's Kit of the Month is Tonda Prochazka's PanAfrican drum set. It is a vintage Gretsch Stop Sign Badge 20,12,14,16 Rosewood finished kit with two extra kpalongos, a dun dun and "banana bells" from Ghana. Tonda has been interested in incorporating genuine African drums into his drum set since 2014. While studying at the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague, Czech Republic he got in touch with several drummers from Ghana, from whom he got these beautiful instruments. This year he is going to Accra for a whole month to study with the masters in person.

Apart from the vintage kit and African drums Tonda is using modern Gretsch snares in 8x14 Maple and 5x14 COB. He uses all Zildjian cymbals: 22" K Constantinople Medium Thin Low Ride, 20" K Light Flat Ride, 15" Avedis Hi-Hats and a 10" A Custom EFX over 10" K Splash as a little Hi-Hat stack. Good luck o your ongoing studies and research Tonda! Nice kit.

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Sorry Charlie…

By Peter Erskine

Much like a melodic "ear worm" that works its way into your brain, the running theme of TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube drumming videos has gotten its claws into my consciousness and conscience. The idea of "certainty" is not (for me) a prime factor upon considering these clips. In fact, my musings have reminded me of that old joke, "Do you have trouble making up your mind?" (The punchline is, "Well, *yes and no* …") On one hand, I'm aware that anyone beyond a certain age, risks resembling or being characterized as an angry old man standing on his porch while yelling at the clouds, "These young drummers don't know what they're doing!" On the other hand, I recognize that many of these "young drummers" are doing things on the instrument that many of us never even thought of, let alone thought might be possible. Yet our experience guides (if not compels) us to know and elucidate "right" from "wrong." To which I now admit, if I *really* knew right from wrong, I would not go any further with this no-win thought experiment. But right from wrong has not stopped me in the past, so here goes

Peter and Harold Jones

First, it is a common knowledge admission that hardening of the arteries is a risk associated with old age. Not just coronary arteries, but musical ones as well. Most of us will develop biases of one sort or another, and it takes an open and vigilant mind to keep the receptors open and amenable. Once a musician has paid it forward enough times in his or her life, a protective sense of propriety can easily form. That sense appears in two ways: One, a sense of responsibility to guide the next generation(s). Two, a compelling urge to protect a standard, even a status quo, as understood by the elder. Trusting that I'm not perceived as too much of a knee-jerker in terms of responding to change, I'll venture on.

Second, let's admit the simple truth that we're ALL trying to do our best. It's easy for anyone to sit back and criticize, and I'll just leave it at promising not to abuse this platform in order to enjoy easy access to the carton of rotting vegetables that's at the ready for assaulting the stage.

Third, "The medium is the message." That's philosopher Marshall McLuhan speaking, and it is from this point of view that I pontificate. McLuhan wrote in 1962 that new technologies exert a gravitational effect on cognition (which, in turn, affects social interactions.) What new technologies was he referring to? In his book, *The Gutenberg Galaxy,* McLuhan studies the impact that the printed word had upon the world, and the phenomenon that wireless sound (the radio, not Bluetooth just yet!) would produce similar shockwaves, just as television would prove to accomplish soon after. Wouldn't you know it, he predicted the issues the World Wide Web would create years ahead of its realization. So what does this have to do with drumming? The venues and opportunities once considered essential to play and be heard are being replaced by an iPhone and a social media account. The creative impulse will never go away, it needs to find its outlet. And today, it seems as though it has on such platforms as YouTube, Instagram and TikTok.

All well and good. Paper business cards? Replaced by video content on-line. End-of-set drum solos? Replaced by video content on-line. Demo tapes? Replaced by video content on-line. Touring / gigging / working bands? Replaced by video content on-line. All of this is to say that not all drummers are just *playing for the band or the song* these days, they are playing to create content. They are content creators. That sentence represents a pretty big change in how the role of the drummer has been conceived and perceived for most of my drumming life. No less of an authority as Buddy Rich paraphrased the immortal "Papa" Jo Jones when he proclaimed, "What makes a jazz drummer is his ability to take any group, whether it's a small group or a big band, and hold those cats together and get something swinging, whatever tempo: up, down, medium. The

function of a jazz drummer is to instill in the other players a force which, in turn, makes the jazz players play better."

Now, when I play along with a track, I do so with the inherent understanding that the musical relationship is a one-way street. No matter what I do or don't do, the backing track will continue merrily on its way. Knowing that, I still approach the music as if the sounds I'm playing to are being created in real time by real players. And I make my musical choices accordingly. When I was very young and left alone with my father's hi-fi record player, I imagined that placing the tonearm upon a vinyl disc summoned tiny men and women who picked up their instruments and played for my pleasure. As fantastical as that image might be, it made just as much sense to me as waveforms, vacuum tubes, and speaker cones… But now that I'm grown-up, I don't harbor any cartoonish notions of how musical sound is reproduced on demand. Still, I respect the original sources of the music: those musicians who played and the stylistic forces brought to bear by generations of musicians who literally gave their lives to play this music. So, call me old-fashioned, but I choose not to deface tradition when it has no chance of fighting back.

All of which brings me to some of the drummers on social media who are playing along with jazz classics and using the platform to demonstrate their considerable skills. And by considerable skills, I mean *jaw-dropping abilities*, truly astonishing stuff. We're seeing technical proficiency that's in another zip code from my modest, almost pedantic by comparison, chops. Contrary to feeling jealousy, I combine awe with pride knowing that musical education is doing a good job, and I'm happy to know that I'm part of that continuum to some degree. There are no sour grapes in my lunchbox. But in terms of aesthetics, does what I'm seeing and hearing being played by a drummer actually make the music better?

Taste is subjective, but there are some universal truths when it comes to style and tradition. I've seen some well-meant comments on various social media posts, containing helpful advice (some of these from well-respected players, arrangers, and bandleaders,) get blasted as being intemperate, petty, mean-spirited, and so on. What I can tell you with certainty, is that most of what I'm seeing and hearing on-line from these self-promotional playing videos represents an approach to playing that would serve to get these drummers *fired* from the band they're playing "on top of" in no time.

You see, a Count Basie track like "Shiny Stockings" represents a lineage of writing and playing that was formed over countless miles and nights of touring, performing, and study. When Frank Foster, who composed and arranged this Basie tune and chart, crafted an open space in the horn/ensemble writing, he did not envision every possible molecule of air being squeezed out of it by an open-stroke roll followed by a choked crash cymbal. It's just wrong on every level. A drummer like Harold Jones, filling Basie's drum chair once occupied by Sonny Payne (who, admittedly, was a showy drummer,) employed space and silence cunningly as a master of the stage. He drew the audience into that space versus exhausting us with musical stunts.

Let's try a thought experiment. Imagine that, instead of "Shiny Stockings," these drumming wares were on display atop Led Zeppelin's "When the Levee Breaks," The Beatles' "Come Together," or The Beach Boys' "Good Vibrations." I cannot help but wonder if anyone beyond an old-hander jazz purist might cry "Foul"? Why should these classics be off-limits to pyrotechnic extravagances?

This is not some "love it or leave it" diatribe. Good taste need not be its own reward. However, there are some practical benefits to being a good listener while playing. For example, as often as I've played along to the Bob Mintzer tune "Tribute" (utilizing the Fuzzy Music APP that Bob and I put together for use on iOS devices,) I still manage to hear something new every time I play it. And this "something new" is something personal that I can then reflect and share to my audience, even if that audience consists of only three persons: me, myself, and I.

On one hand, Pablo Picasso said, "Good taste is the enemy of creativity." On the other hand, in Nora Ephron's film *When Harry Met Sally*, Carrie Fisher speaks the lines, "Everybody thinks they have good taste and a sense of humor, *but they couldn't possibly all have good taste*." Even Charlie the Tuna (remember him?) sought good taste, only to be reminded time and again (by the announcer in those animated ads,) that StarKist was only interested in tuna that ***tasted*** good. Here's my barometer: if Harold Jones didn't play it, there was a darned good reason he didn't.

Check out Peter's drummer profile page, and get a copy of his Legends book at moderndrummer.com

NEW and NOTABLE

LP 60th Anniversary Congas, Bongos, Timbales and Cajons, and "Dandy" Rodriguez Bongos

Sixty years ago, it began with a simple set of bongos! Martin Cohen, founder of Latin Percussion (LP), fell in love with the infectious nature of Latin-Jazz and when he could not find any bongos, he decided to make some – the traditional way, and LP was born. Building on the company's legacy of authenticity, innovation, and quality, LP are delighted to launch the 60th Anniversary Congas, Bongos, Timbales and Cajon.

The limited-edition set of 60th Anniversary Congas are constructed of fiberglass to pay tribute to LP's original drums and Top-Tuning Comfort Curve II rims representing the company's latest evolution in conga technology. The set consists of an 11" Quinto, 11 ¾" Conga and a 12 ½" Tumba. Each drum shell is hand-painted with Roasted Hazel finish ensuring each drum is unique. They are emblazoned with a commemorative LP60 badge and complemented by select black, rawhide heads, and Rustic Bronze-plated hardware.

Made to match the Congas, the limited-edition 60th Anniversary Bongos (LP200XF-60) are built using Kevlar reinforced fibreglass, feature Comfort Curve II rims, and $^{5}/_{16}$" tension rods, have a hand-painted, Roasted Hazel finish with black, rawhide heads, and Rustic Bronze-plated hardware. The pair of 7-¼" and 8-$^{5}/_{8}$" drums offer a crisp and resonant tone.

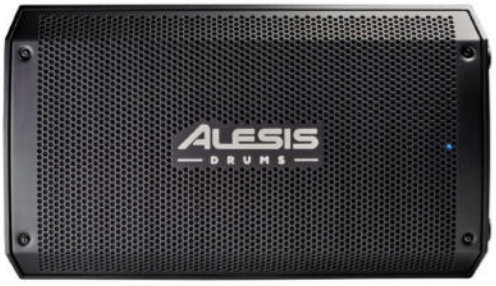
The 60th Anniversary Groove Cajon (LP1427-60) is also made to coordinate with the Congas with its hand-painted Roasted Hazel finish and Rustic Bronze soundboard finish. Measuring 18-½" by 11" by 10-¼" it is crafted from hand-selected Baltic Birch and features rounded corners for comfortable play.

Also produced are the matching 60th Anniversary Timbales (LP1415-60). The 14" and 15" steel shell drums feature rolled out bottoms, a tribute to LP's original drums, and the latest Top-Tuning Comfort Curve II rims The shells are finished in Antique Bronze with Rustic Bronze hardware giving the timbales a retro feel with a modern twist.

In addition to the 60th Anniversary Limited Addition line, LP is also introducing the 60th Anniversary 'Dandy' Bongos. Johnny 'Dandy' Rodriguez jr. is a percussion icon whose association with LP goes back to the very founding of the company. He is a world-renowned, pioneering bongocero, who has played with the greatest including more than 30 years with the Tito Puente Orchestra. The limited-edition Zebra Wood 60th Anniversary "Dandy" Bongos are a tribute to this masterful musician and the Zebra bongos LP made in the 1970s. LP worked with legendary DW "wood whisperer," John Good, to source the exotic Zebra Wood. The single-ply stave shells of the

drums are fitted with a 7-¼" and 9" rawhide heads and chrome-plated traditional hardware with Cuban-style buttons. Limited to 200 sets worldwide, each set is signed and numbered by Dandy making them truly collectible. To find out more about the LP 60th Anniversary products and events, please visit **lpmusic.com/.**

Alesis Drums Announces Drum Amplification with Strike Amp 12 MK2 and 8 MK2



Alesis Drums announced that it has launched the Strike Amp 12 MK2 and Strike Amp 8 MK2 - two new additions to its growing line of electronic drum amplification. These amplifiers are specifically designed for the frequency ranges that electronic drum kits and multipad instruments produce, providing clear and powerful sound.

The Strike Amp series is highlighted by its robust features tailored for the modern musician. The Strike Amp 8 MK2 and Strike Amp 12 MK2 both deliver substantial power — 2000 watts and 2500 watts respectively. This power ensures sound is able to cut through in any performance environment.

Each model is crafted for easy integration into the user's setup, with Bluetooth® connectivity for wireless audio streaming, dual combo XLR + 1/4" inputs for direct instrument connection, as well as an XLR output for linking multiple amplifiers or connecting to a PA system. This thoughtful design accommodates various performance spaces including home and project studios and on-stage environments. Both the Strike Amp 12 MK2 and Strike Amp 8 MK2 incorporate a High Pass Filter (HPF) switch. This switch allows for the swift removal of problematic frequencies, ensuring that the drums cut through the mix with clarity and definition. Additionally, a Ground Lift switch is included to address and eliminate any potential ground loop noise, preventing hums and buzzes that can detract from the quality of a performance. These design considerations underscore Alesis's commitment to providing drummers with versatile, performance-ready amplification solutions.

Both amplifiers are constructed to be sturdy and lightweight, facilitating easy transport and setup for performances or practice sessions. The design also accommodates various placement options: they can be positioned in a traditional upright stance, laid back in a wedge formation for direct monitoring, or mounted on a pole for elevated sound dispersion. This flexibility is invaluable for ensuring optimal sound coverage, particularly in outdoor settings or venues where the PA system's reach might be constrained. The Strike Amp series guarantees your drum sounds are delivered precisely where needed. Pricing: Strike Amp 8 - $299.00, Strike Amp 12 - $399.00. For additional information on the Strike Amp 12 MK2 and Strike Amp 8 MK2, go to **alesis.com**

Sabian Introduces 22" HHX BFMWORLD Ride

Developed in collaboration with Brian Frasier-Moore and the artisans at SABIAN, the 22" HHX BFMWORLD Ride is a medium weight ride cymbal with a large, clear, cutting bell. Its proprietary HHX Tone Control hammering creates large, deep hammer marks that result in its stunning visual appearance and amazing tone.

"The design of my Signature ride is catered to those that love a crystal-clear bell and a multi-purpose surface," said Frasier-Moore. "The surface is washable as well as articulate, while the jumbo hammer does something really special to the tone."

The BFMWORLD Ride incorporates a sound control edge, which lowers the profile of the cymbal and adds crash-ability, resulting in a ride with clear presence and attack. This feature allows you to crash the cymbal and immediately return to playing the bow without losing a note.

"This part of the design is a nod to Chester Thompson, whose Signature Liquid Ride has always been a favorite of mine," Frasier-Moore said. "With the edges turned up a bit, it gives you control when you're laying into the ride. Growing up playing in church I remember my ride always being multi-purpose. 30 years later, nothing's changed!" For additional information visit: **https://sabian.com/product/122xbfm-22-inch-hhx-bfm-world-ride/**

Doc Sweeney FOCUS Series Snares

Future Past….The Clean, Articulate, Sensitive, and the FOCUSED!

By Brian Hill

The Past

The 1928 catalogue for the Slingerland Banjo & Drum Company was quite possibly the first "real" catalogue for this "new" drum company. It was chock full of a plethora of high-quality drums and accessories that were designed to give Ludwig (and Leedy) a real run for their money. Most of the Slingerland drums looked very similar, except when you turned them around to reveal the Slingerland snare throw-off and the very distinct "Cloud Badge" logo. One of the very effective innovations that Slingerland did introduce was called the "Tone Flange." It was quite possibly one of the first real advancements in drum technology in decades.

Slingerland took the metal flange idea from their banjos and placed it directly under the batter head of a snare. The metal flange was a removable, two-piece assembly that included a metal ring that rested on the top of the shell and a downward sloping metal tone flange sitting on top of the ring. The flange piece ultimately acted as the bearing edge for the drum. In most of the original examples, vent holes were incorporated in the flange to aid with air flow, resulting in a focused, articulate, clean and sensitive response.

Reasoning that by reducing the diameter of the batter head/shell area from 14 inches to an interior diameter of about 11 inches, it would effectively direct the energy of the stroke from the batter head and focus that energy downward toward the center of the snare head and thus the snares themselves. It worked beautifully! The sensitivity of the snares was brought front and center.

Back to the Future

As has been seen previously with their HolloCore Snares, the folks at Doc Sweeney Drums and Steve Stecher, founder and Master Drum Builder in particular, have a really bad habit of not only thinking outside of the box, but in many cases, rebuilding the box entirely! This time, Steve looked back at this near century old idea and focused on improving it for today's environment, while adding his own unique twist. Doc Sweeney Drums sent *Modern Drummer* a brand new Focus Series snare drum for us to, *well*….. Focus on. So, let's take this one apart and get Focused!

The Focus Series snare we received is a solid, one-piece maple stave constructed shell measuring 6" x 14" with a shell thickness of .375". The raw stave shell starts out with a wall thickness of 1.5", which is then custom milled using a proprietary CNC technology to create the one-piece, solid "tone flange" style shell. The shell has a downward sloping 45-degree angle on the inside of the top side of the shell. The snare side inside bearing edge is also 45 degrees.

The "flange" part of the shell forms the top bearing edge and acts like a reinforcement ring. There is no ring on the bottom, as I don't think it would be necessary considering the one-piece aspect of the design. The outside of the bearing edges looks like a 30-degree round-over angle, designed to conform with the collar of the drumhead. The shallow snare beds were a "medium" width of about four inches wide.

As with the original idea, the batter side diameter is thus reduced from 14" down to 11" internally, focusing the energy down toward the center of the snare head. Holes for the flange, as well as for the shell hardware are then drilled. The shell is then

finely sanded, and a beautiful satin lacquer finish is applied. There is a very informative video on YouTube describing this process.

The hardware is all high-end and fully chrome-plated and includes 3 mm triple-fanged counter hoops; 8-double-post, Lea Hung tube lugs; Black Swamp Arch snare strainer and butt; 20-stand German wire snares; along with a metal vent hole grommet. The lugs and snare butt were all insulated from the shell. Both heads are Evans and include the Strata 1000 batter and a clear 300 snare side head. Instead of using a metal badge, the Doc Sweeney Focus Series logo is laser etched into the wood shell. This is a nice touch!

The versatility and sounds that you can get from this drum are truly remarkable. There are a lot of variations you can try when it comes to head and snare selection, as well as the tuning you employ. Let's start with the drum as it came out of the box. I had not tried the Evans Strata 1000 batter head before. The Strata 1000 has a hazy, translucent look and is a single ply 10mil film with a darker timbre and warm tone that resembles a thicker calfskin head.

The drum was tuned low, so I put it on a concert stand and started working with it that way. I found an amazing sensitively and articulation that was a bit dry and brought out the sound of the snares and the drum shell. I also noticed a "drone" sound with a big wide note as you moved louder through the volume scale. As I moved up to a higher tuning, the drum followed me brilliantly! Clean sound and cut-offs, with no unwanted over-tones. The note-width tightened as I cranked it up. Loud notes just "popped!" Grace notes had a very crisp, and defined snare quality.

The drum came with an additional set of Black Swamp Percussion "Standard Cable Snares," Model S14S. There was a note taped to these snares from Steve that said, "In case you're curious." You bet I am! With the Black Swamp strainer, it took me less than 5 minutes to switch out the snares. These S14S snares are comprised of an extremely fine gage wire consisting of 16 stands. The low volume snare sensitively was totally "off-the-hook!"

The Evans Strata 1000 batter head lived up to its expectations so much, I had to try a calfskin head. This was also a great choice for this drum. I will say that the calfskin was naturally "warmer' than the Strata, but not much different except that the Strata head is a mylar film and will take a beating much better than the calfskin and without the challenges that come with temperature and humidity changes. This created a great combination for jazz, concert, and orchestral applications.

But how will this drum work for basic drum set playing? Well, amazing! Back to the 20-strand snares and an Evans G1 coated batter head. The Evans G1 coated batter head is also a 10mil film. So, the thickness is the same as the Strata 1000 batter head. The G1 has a brighter tone and sustain and is a very versatile head choice. I went up and down the tuning spectrum with this head on the drum and was equally blown away by what this drum can do. I really liked the sonic separation between grace notes and back-beats! You can really get rudimental on this drum with power and clarity.

Being a totally solid, stave construction drum, the "thump" from this tub will hit your center hard. It has an incredible "presence" to it. The Doc Sweeney Focus Series "timbre," if you will, is hard for me to describe accurately, but it is very sweet, identifiable, cutting, musical, a bit dry, and "all snare drum." It is the highest of quality. You'll like it in the "snares-off" position as well with its rich tones. Brush work is easy, super responsive, and sounds great. Cross sticking has a nice clear crack.

With some snare drums, there is a distinct "sweet spot" in the center of the drum that you want to hit consistently to get the best sound out of your drum. The Focus Series snare has an extremely wide "sweet spot." You can get a bit "wild" with your playing and have real consistency in sound. Because of the tone flange design the snare sensitivity extends very well laterally when not hitting directly along the path of the snare wires.

As for the looks of this drum, classy, is a good word to sum this one up! With both heads off, I ran my eyes and fingers over the shell, inside and out, it just felt right! I could tell this was a piece of woodworking that *had* to sound good. I'm also now a big fan of the Evans Strata 1000 head that came on this drum. They have lots of attack, but are so much warmer, and have a great look.

The guys at Doc Sweeney Drums are just a bit different from the normal "drum guys." Their attention to detail is unsurpassed, and their wide ranging and intriguing thinking is unlimited. Their workmanship completely raises the bar. This includes the totally cool, Doc Sweeney Drums logo inside each drum, and every drum is signed and dated by Steve Stecher.

A quick trip through the drum galleries on their website will grab your attention and give some new ideas on what is possible in drum making. The Doc Sweeney Focus Series Snare has few real peers. It's in its own category of high-end, musical, super sensitive, and versatile drums. These are drums that will set you apart. The bar has been raised……because Doc Sweeney Focused on raising it! Check 'em out and see if you can find your future in the past! The retail price is around $950.00

Docsweeneydrums.com

SE Electronics SE4100 AND T1 Microphones

By Jason Mehler

Leaner Workhorse Mics at the Right Price

Announced in time for NAMM 2024, SE Electronics released their SE4100 and T1 large diaphragm condenser microphones. These new additions to sE's product line are modeled after the sE4400 and T2 mics and designed to deliver the same quality and performance (minus a few options) at a lower price. We received factory-matched pairs of each model for this month's product close-up.

What's in the Box?

Each matched pair of sE condenser mics are packaged in a sturdy latched flight case. The foam interior safely houses two microphones, two shock mounts, and a threaded mounting bar for stereo mic positioning.

Specifications

In terms of specs, the sE4100 and the T1 are almost identical. The only difference is that the sE4100 has a black chassis with a gold-sputtered capsule/diaphragm while the T1 has a metallic-colored chassis and titanium-sputtered capsule/diaphragm. Other than that, they share the following specs: **Power Requirements:** 48V Phantom power, **Connectivity**: 3-pin male XLR connector.

Sound Quality and Versatility

Polar Pattern: Unlike their feature-rich (more expensive) siblings, the sE4100 and T1 condensers only offer a Cardioid polar pattern. It is still a very versatile mic, useful for a wide range of applications such as drum overheads, guitar amps, pianos, etc. **Frequency Range**: A wide frequency range of 20 – 20,000 Hz enables these microphones to capture a full spectrum of sounds. **Sensitivity**: At 25 mV/Pa (-32 dBV), the mics are sensitive enough to pick up fine details, yet robust in handling louder sounds. **Maximum SPL**: The sound pressure level handling of these mics varies depending on the attenuation switch setting, and ranges between 137 and 157 dB. **Equivalent Noise Level and Signal-to-Noise Ratio**: With an equivalent noise level of 9 dB(A) and a signal-to-noise ratio of 85 dB, these mics promise clear, low-noise audio capture. **Low-Cut Filter and Attenuation Pad**: The switchable low-cut filter (80 / 160 Hz, 6 dB/oct) and attenuation pad (10 / 20 dB) are very useful and make these mics a great option for multi-use recording situations.

Build Quality and Style

The design of the Se4100 and T1 and their counterparts are clearly based on the classic AKG C414, which has been a staple for drums and guitar recording for ages. The all-metal housing and switches put these mics at a weight of 10.23 oz., which feels nice to hold and certainly feels durable. The dimensions of the 2 mics set them apart from the C414 and their own sE counterparts, as they are only 1.10 inches thick. This is because the cardioid pattern only requires a single diaphragm capsule to pick up sound from one side of the microphone. The mics are also slightly shorter than the C414, measuring 5.75 inches in length as opposed to 6.3 inches.

Microphone Features

The funny thing about these mics is that the lack of features is actually the *main* feature. The idea was to strip out the multi-pattern features of the sE4400 and T2 and produce a cardioid-only version with the exact same internal components otherwise. The thinking behind it was that there are those of us who don't need the all-in-one polar pattern options and would rather a less expensive version with the same quality and characteristics.

There are, however, two features on these mics that

make them very versatile. One is the low-cut switch, which allows you to drop all frequencies below 80 or 160 Hz, and the passive attenuation switch (PAD), which lowers the signal by -10 or -20 dB. Another feature I should mention about the products I received is that they are factory-matched pairs, meaning they were rigorously tested and tuned to ensure a virtually identical frequency response.

Comparing the T4100 and T1

The main difference between the T4100 and the T1 is the material makeup of the diaphragm. The titanium coated diaphragm of the T1 is expected to react quicker to sound wave changes than the gold-sputtered sE4100 due to the stronger metal. This rapid transient response should be ideal for high SPL applications such as drums and percussion. The softer metal on the sE4100, though still probably great for drums, is expected to do well for miking warmer sources like guitar amps, organ, strings, and wind instruments.

I decided to do a comparison test to see if I could detect a difference between the titanium and gold transient response. I brought them to a studio for testing with a full drum kit. Now, I will preface by saying that my test environment, while having nice room acoustics, is not an acoustic isolation or anechoic test chamber, so I'm not setting or challenging any benchmarks here. I'm just looking for an average result from a quick and dirty comparison. I was also not worried about the stereo image for the comparison test. My only concern was getting as close to an identical signal as I could get.

I set up a single SE4100 mic and a single T1 mic side-by-side, as close together as I could get them without contacting each other. I used identical XLR cables and ran them to an Ableton live session on the laptop through an iRig 2-channel interface. I placed the mics in an overhead position about 35" above (and slightly in front of) the snare drum on a 6-piece Yamaha kit. After meticulously matching the input levels on both mics I set the PAD to -10dB and disabled the low cut to capture all frequencies. I proceeded to record myself striking each drum on the kit and then playing a basic beat with some fills and cymbal work.

My initial impression from the recording, prior to comparing the mics, was that both tracks sounded great. The drums sounded rich and punchy, with clean highs and excellent low to mid-range response. It made me smile. I proceeded to toggle (A/B test) the recorded tracks, listening on various devices such as headphones and studio monitors (see below for result.)

Stereo Overhead Testing

I mounted the matched pairs of both the sE4100 and the T1, placing one mic from each pair equal distance from the snare drum (about 40") on either side of the kit. Once again, at -10dB on the PAD and no low cut, I matched the levels and confirmed there was no phasing. I recorded both pairs individually and reviewed the recorded audio on various devices.

My Findings

As far as the comparison between the titanium and the gold-sputtered transient response, to my "Average Joe" ear, I could barely tell the difference. They both performed extremely well across the frequency range. I did however notice a small bit of "snappiness" from the snare drum on the T1. I found it to be a bit more appealing. But we are talking margin of error type stuff. It's possible that the tiny difference would grow more apparent once compression and EQ are applied. I'll leave that for another day. Both mics sounded amazing regardless. As for the stereo pair test, there was absolutely no discernable difference between the individual mics from each pair, which is a testament to the consistency of sE's quality control process. As expected, the recordings sounded wonderful, and the stereo image was full and immersive.

One thing that I wanted to check out was how the mics compared to the AKG C414. I did some hunting and wound up on audiotestkitchen.com where they had the sE4400 and T2 as well as the C414 in their comparison tool. Being that those sE mics use the same diaphragms as our test mics, it was worth a listen. I found the C414 to be a bit hot in the higher frequency range, which may be what some people are looking for. I prefer the evenness of the sE mics.

In Conclusion

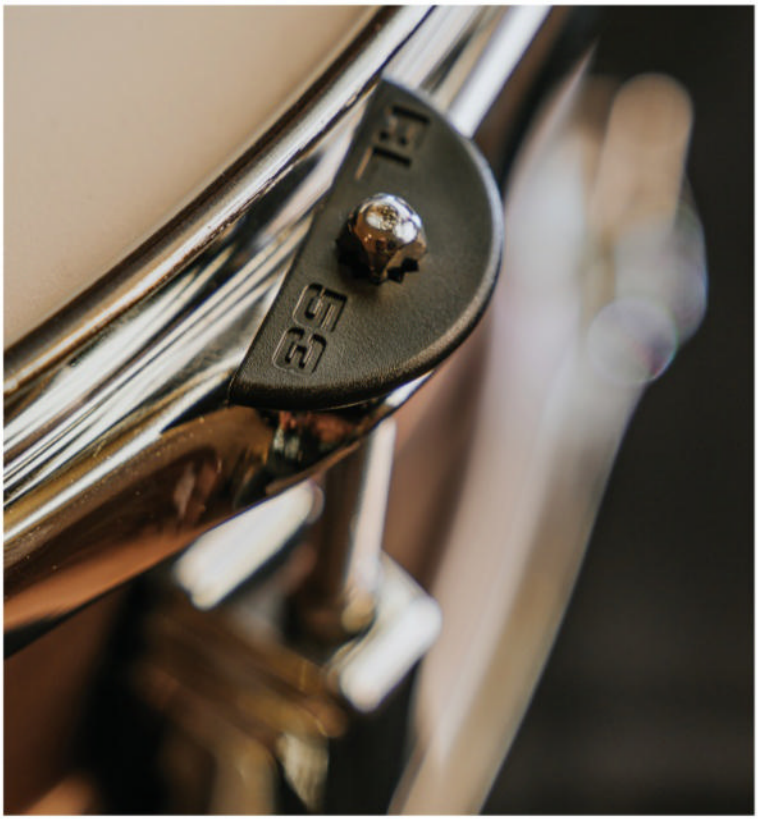
I think it was a wise decision on sE's part to produce these more affordable versions of their workhorse condenser mics with just the essentials. I feel it opens a lane for folks on a budget to acquire professional quality condenser mics for a reasonable price. For those who can spring for the multi-pattern versions, they won't be disappointed either. The sE4100 and T1 microphones retail for $349 individually or $699 for the pair. More info at: **www.seelectronics.com**

Rock Locks

By Jason Mehler

Secure Your Tension Rods

It's a common problem that has been plaguing drummers for decades. You're playing drums and your tension rods dance and micro-spin their way out of tune. It happens to snares and toms alike. If you're just practicing, it's a nuisance, but if you're playing a show, it can be infuriating. Luckily the folks at Rock Locks have a solution. They sent us a few sets of their tension rod locks to try out for this month's product close-up.



A Quick Story

When I was thirteen, my father would take me to see his friend's top 40 band at a local venue. The drummer was just incredible. He had a blazing fast single-pedal technique and the most consistent, slamming rimshots that I had ever heard. So much so, that his sticks were eaten away at the dead center like a beaver had been chomping on them. His drum rug was buried under a bed of hickory mulch and yes, he was constantly re-tuning his snare drum.

I too began to play heavy rimshots from that point on and found myself reaching for the drum key between songs. It's just natural that when the downward force of the drumstick hits the rim, the nearest tension rod frees up a little and unscrews itself. I've solved this in a crunch with a little gaffer's tape (not proud of that), but there's no need for that anymore.

Product Description

Patent-Pending Rock Locks are made of durable plastic and are shaped like a half-circle with a 12-point star shape punched out in the center. The hole allows you to push the Rock Lock onto your drum's tension rods, which prevents the micro-spin (mentioned earlier) that can happen during playing. It's a simple concept, but does it work?

Testing the Rock Locks

I was provided three 10-packs of Rock Locks in various sizes for this product close-up. I took them with me to the studio where I have several drums with different sized tension rods. I went around to all the drums and matched up the Rock Lock sizes with the tension rods. A few were too large for the standard size, but the new 53 Soft's did the trick. They all seem to push on nice and snug. They felt secure and I doubted they were going anywhere. I proceeded to swap out snare drums on my drum kit and wail on the rimshots, trying to force the locks to come free. They did not. Nor did the drum become detuned. Even as I got up and my leg grazed one of the locks, it stayed intact. I kind of knew that would be the case because I've heard from several touring drummers that these things are working wonders for them on the road.

Conclusion

If you are a drummer or a drum tech, you need something like Rock Locks on your drums or in your toolbox. They work. The 10-pack sells for $19.99. Check the website to make sure you order the correct size for your drums. Visit **rocklocksusa.com** to order yours.

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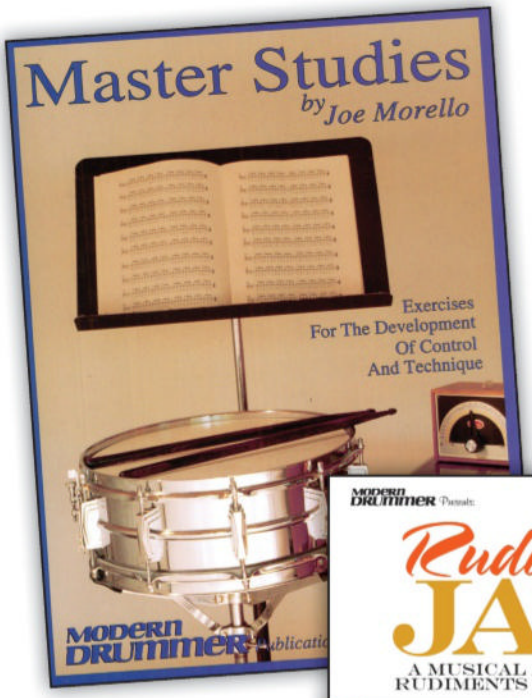
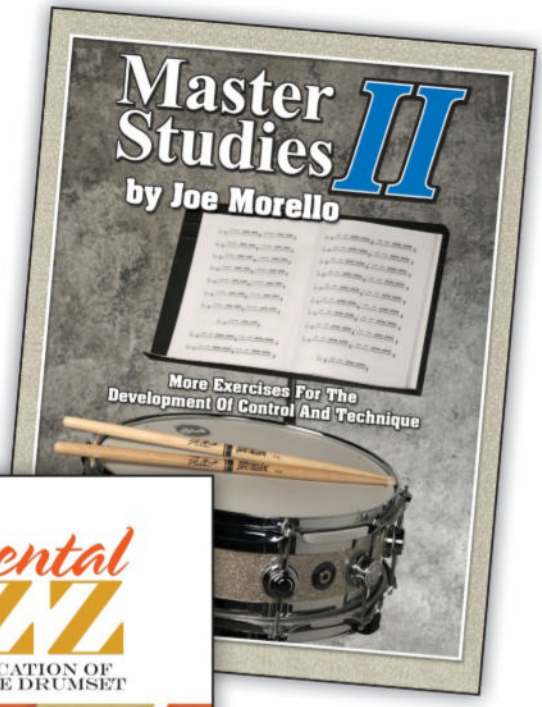
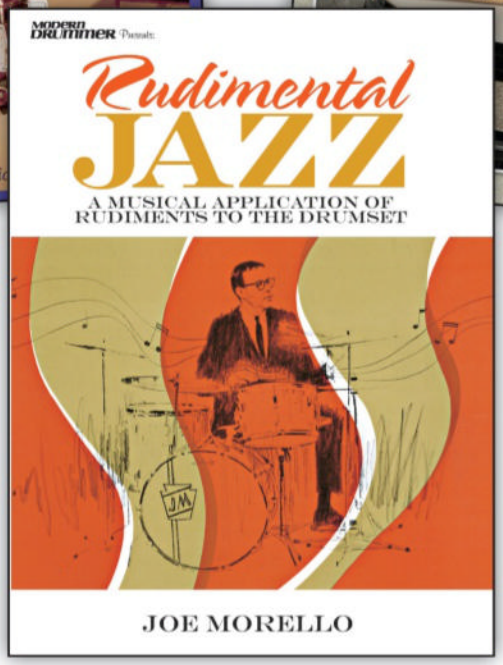
The Joe Morello Collection





Master Studies
This book focuses on these important aspects: accent studies, buzz-roll exercises, single and double-stroke patterns, control studies, flam patterns, dynamic development, endurance studies, and much more!



Master Studies II
Like Master Studies, this is a workbook of material to use in developing the hands for drumming. Challenging exercises encourage students to learn slow, sensible and accurate practice techniques.

Rudimental Jazz
The precursor to his two most widely used instructional books – Master Studies and Master Studies II – this book covers: techniques such as right and left hand grips, playing position, striking the snare drum & hi-hat and more; beginning exercises; drum beats; teacher's charts; graphic cutouts and more.

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Alex Kluft

Russ Kunkel

Drumming with The Immediate Family and Lyle Lovett

By Mark Griffith

Russ Kunkel is a true drumming legend. He has spent an entire career drumming for THE most significant singer-songwriters in music history. His drumming on classic recordings like Carole King's *Tapestry*, Joni Mitchel's *Blue*, James Taylor's *Sweet Baby James*, and Jackson Browne's *Running on Empty* is iconic and perfect. His playing with Dan Fogelberg further cements his hitmaking prowess, and his playing and producing with Jimmy Buffett is stellar. However, it is his playing on most of James Taylor's catalog including his biggest hits "Fire and Rain" and "Country Road" that get most drummer's attention. However, Russ will steer you to Gene Clark's *No Other* as a personal favorite. His playing and recordings with Bob Dylan, Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young, Bob Seger, Carly Simon, Warren Zevon, Stevie Nicks, and Linda Ronstadt provide enough career highlights for 10 different drummers, but it's all Russ. His more recent playing with Mary Chapin-Carpenter is the pinnacle of taste. To top it off, Russ has been Lyle Lovett's touring and recording drummer for over 20 years, starting with Lovett's definitive recording *Joshua Judges Ruth.* Believe it or not, Kunkel was even in *Spinal Tap*. But most recently, Russ Kunkel's playing in the all-star band The Immediate Family, including their latest record, *Skin In The Game* and the recent documentary about the band, has been getting a lot of well-deserved attention. Russ Kunkel doesn't do many interviews, so get ready for an interesting story about a musical and drumming legend.

MD: How did you start drumming?
RK: I was born, and I grew up in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. My oldest brother Gilbert (we called him Bud) was a drummer, he played in the high school marching band, and he had a band that consisted of upright bass, accordion, a saxophonist, and my brother on drums, that would rehearse at our house. They played the music of the time, meaning a lot of polkas and some of the popular songs of the day, the saxophone was the melody instrument. At one point I remember Bud putting me on his lap, I was six or so, and he put the sticks in my hands and moved my hands around the set, that really stuck with me.

My father passed away when I was nine, and my mom and I moved to California. My sister had already moved out there and had gotten married, and my brother had moved there as well. I was living with my brother in Daly City just south of San Francisco, and in fifth grade I joined the orchestra. I was playing snare and bass drum for that year, but I got kicked out of the orchestra for always wanting to riff on the snare drum and creating a ruckus. By the time I was in seventh grade, my mom and I had moved south to Long Beach, California and I met some guys who played guitar. This was around 1964 or '65, so we started putting various bands together. At that period in time Southern California was a music mecca and I was right in the middle of it. I'm very fortunate to have been in the right place at the right time, but I owe it all to my brother.

Later I was in a band called The Things to Come, and we were the house band at The Whisky a Go Go for about 19 weeks. We opened for Cream, The Hollies, The Byrds, Gene Clark, Spirit, The Electric Flag, CTA (which became Chicago,) The Hourglass (which became The Allman Brothers,) and lots of other bands. That was a real musical education! Jimi Hendrix's *Are You Experienced?* and The Band's *Music from Big Pink* came out at just about the same time, and I was very into those two records.
MD: Since you were opening for all those bands, what jumped out at you from seeing those bands live?
RK: Mario and Elmer (who ran the Whisky a Go Go) took our band under their wings, it was an amazing time, we got to see a lot of great music and we were right in the middle of the Sunset Strip. It was an unbelievable education that solidified my goal of wanting to become a professional musician. Shortly after that, the band kind of ran its course. I was married and my wife was about to have a baby, so I had to start getting real about life. I didn't know whether I wanted to continue playing in a band, so I started doing some sessions. Fortunately, I got into doing some session work and I met a wonderful man named Joel Sill who was running ABC Dunhill's publishing company at the time. Joel hired me to do publishing demos over at American Studios, that's where I met Larry Knechtel, Joe Osborne, and Tommy Tedesco. I didn't meet Hal Blaine at the time because he was busy doing "real sessions," I was just doing publishing demo sessions.
MD: What were some of your first studio experiences like?
RK: For the most part, I *think* I was doing everything right. My drums sounded pretty good. I had a Sonor kit that my mom had bought me that I brought to Hollywood with me**.** They liked the way I played, and they liked the way that my drums sounded, so that kind of catapulted me to the engineers recommending for more work, which is really what you want. I came into all those sessions with the attitude of trying to find out what people needed and giving it to them. I have to say that it was easy to

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sound pretty good if Larry Knechtel was playing piano and Joe Osborne was playing bass.

Through some of my friends I met musician John Stewart (of the Kingston Trio) who had just recorded the record *California Bloodlines*. John was one of the first Americana artists, and I learned a lot about playing with singer-songwriters through playing with John, I owe him a lot of thanks. He hired me to do a tour, and during the rehearsals Peter Asher stopped by, he was looking for musicians to record with James Taylor. Peter hired me to play on James Taylor's *Sweet Baby James* record, and because of my work with John, I was fully prepared.

MD: What did you learn from John Stewart about playing with singer-songwriters?

RK: John wrote great "story songs" and for his performance and songs to make any sense, you had to support the story and support the song. Early on, I really learned to pay attention to the lyrics and try to play something that had some sympatico with the story of the song you're playing.

MD: When I am playing, I am always thinking along with the plotline of the song. I am looking for where the song climaxes, and how to build it to that peak (for example.) Is that what you are referring to?

RK: As far as the lyrics go, I want to know what the song is talking about, that will register some sort of emotion with me. Then I'll try to connect the emotion that I have about the song with some sort of sonic template. I'm always trying to play something that I've never done before, that's one of the things that I try to do. The sonic template might inspire me (for example) to just play the whole song as a rhythm pattern with mallets on the toms and with the snares off. That's just an example of something I've done before, but things like that really work. I try to do different stuff, and then I make sure that the artist likes whatever I'm playing. You just wait for the muse to arrive and give you a performance.

Early on, I really learned to pay attention to the lyrics and try to play something that had some sympatico with the story of the song you're playing.

Sometimes I try to get in the mind of Manu Katché. He plays such unusual parts between the beats. Listen to his playing on the Robbie Robertson album or the albums that he did with Sting. Manu comes up with such wonderful parts, I would love to be able to be inside of his head and see exactly how he comes up with

those things, nobody else plays like Manu, and it works.

MD: Along those lines, could you tell me about the inspiration to play brushes on those amazing fills (and on the rest of the song) on James Taylor's "Fire and Rain"?

RK: We rehearsed the songs for that album in Peter Asher's empty living room. James and Danny were playing acoustic guitar, and Carol was playing piano. There was no PA system or monitors. During the rehearsals I couldn't use sticks because I would have drowned everyone out, so I played brushes during the rehearsals. Brushes worked perfectly on a lot of the songs. When we went in the studio, there were songs that I knew would need sticks like "Country Road" and "Suite for 20G," and I think "Blossom" has sticks too. But when it came time to record "Fire and Rain" I really liked what I was playing when we were rehearsing it, so I asked Peter. I said, "I could play sticks on this, but I think I should just play what I played in rehearsals," and he agreed, so I did. It's basically using brushes as you would use sticks, but the brushes will make you play with a little bit more intention. The playing feels a little bit more forceful, and it turned out to be OK.

But when it came time to record "Fire and Rain" I really liked what I was playing when we were rehearsing it... It's basically using brushes as you would use sticks, but the brushes will make you play with a little bit more intention. The playing feels a little bit more forceful...

MD: In the *Immediate Family* documentary there is a segment of you playing those actual fills, were you aware of either keeping the brush on the toms to create a more "closed" sound, and pulling them off of the drums to create a more "open" sound within the fill?

RK: The brush comes off the head, it's the whipping motion of the brush. A brush does something that a stick doesn't do, when you hit a drum with a stick it's being whipped down, but the stick doesn't bend. The brush bends, I played those notes as rim shots with the brushes, I tore those brushes up playing rim shots on the toms, but it was just about the sound, it's a softer kind of a thud.

However, one thing about "Fire and Rain" that a lot of people don't realize, is that there's not an electric bass on that track, it's Bobby West

Alex Kluft

playing an arco bass. The drum sound is presented in a way that's unusual, because there's no traditional bass on the track. Even without mixing it any differently, you really get a sense of the drums place in the song. The sound of the toms and the sound of the kick drum; everything is different because the track doesn't have a bass on it and the drums are more noticeable.

It actually just occurred to me that I played those fills over the bar line because of the way James constructed the song. There were these holes, and the chords were just pedaling, it just seemed like a natural thing to come out of one chord and lead into another chord with those fills.

We were playing Carnegie Hall with James Taylor on the *Sweet Baby James* tour and James' attorney was a man named Nat Weiss. Nat also represented The Beatles when they came over, he was good friends with Brian Epstein. James was doing an encore by himself, and I was the first person to get back to the dressing room. As I came into the dressing room, Nat was standing by the door with Miles Davis, who was also a client. Miles was standing there in all of his glory and Nat introduced us. Miles shook my hand and said, "Drummer, I dig what you did with the brushes." At that moment I could have died and gone to heaven. I didn't need to do anything else.

MD: Did you come to using brushes from any sort of a jazz-brush playing background?

RK: No, until recently my brush playing has been really unconventional, I've just used them however I see fit. But in the last four years I've done a deep dive, I got back into a real steady practicing regime, I do 1/2 hour on the pad every day and a lot of sight reading. I just decided that I wanted to improve in some areas. I'm learning more about different kinds of brush techniques and I'm loving it, and I have a place to use it when I'm playing with Lyle Lovett. I never played a big band chart before I played with Lyle, and now I do when I play with his large band. I love the whole concept of playing that kind of that kind of music, so I'm kind of reverse learning some of this stuff, and it's working. When you're reading rhythm charts it's a finite amount of information, once you know it, you know it. But if you practice reading and playing it all stays with you. That's one of the things that I never really learned, but now I've thrown myself back into it to make sure that I'm capable of doing it. I'm noticing when I go to sessions now, if the parts are written down, I know exactly what they are.

MD: You didn't have to read that much throughout your career?

RK: No, I had to read occasionally. I would get called to do some gigs where I had to read, but I was also doing some film scores recording for Hans Zimmer. I had done a movie for him called *Cool Runnings*, and when you work for Hans, they have everything pre-recorded, all the parts are temped out, even the drum parts. They'll play you the temp and I could (for the most part) hear what was happening. I just had to read a chart enough to count the bars and know when to stop or when I'm not supposed to play. But as far as reading every single note I wasn't that good at it. On *Cool Runnings* there wasn't any issues. But later, there was another film and Hans called me in. There was a very specific eight bar drum break. We're going along and suddenly, the 60-piece orchestra stops, and I'm supposed to be playing the break, and I just choked. We tried it two or three times and Hans gets on the talk back and says, "OK everybody we're going to take a lunch break." I got up and just sucked my ego down and went into the control room and said, "Hans I am really sorry, do you mind if I stay with the 2nd engineer and just punch in the break, I know I can't play it from top to bottom but I'll just punch it in and get it right so when

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I played those notes as rim shots with the brushes... it was just about the sound, it's a softer kind of a thud.

we come back we can move on." Hans gets on the talk back and while everyone's walking out of the room Hans says, "Hey everybody, I just want to let you all know that Russ is going to stay during the lunch break and play the part that he couldn't play, he's going to get it all done for us so we can move on, I just wanted everyone to know we'll be moving on after lunch."

MD: Oh wow, that's funny (at least now it is,) *gee thanks for your subtlety Hans* (laughs.)

RK: But I learned the lesson to not be unprepared, and a little humility never hurts.

MD: What other things have you been practicing?

RK: I've been working on strengthening my left hand, which is every drummer's nightmare. I would like to be able to play open-handed.

MD: Can you tell us a little of what you have learned from playing with some of the greatest songwriters ever, Joni Mitchell, Carole King, and James Taylor? You played with James for a very long time, and you created many of the parts that Carlos Vega and Steve Gadd have played after you.

RK: After playing with John Stewart, James was an extension of my education into playing with singer-songwriters. To work extensively with James from that time on was a great experience. I'm so fortunate, the artists that I worked with are just the creme de la crème. In in a 12-month period of 1970 and 1971, I played on *Sweet Baby James, Tapestry*, and Joni Mitchell's *Blue*. The education that I got about playing with singer-songwriters was intense, and it all just happened. Carol's an artist that knows what she wants, if you're doing what she likes

Miles shook my hand and said, "Drummer, I dig what you did with the brushes." At that moment I could have died and gone to heaven. I didn't need to do anything else.

she has nothing to say to you, but if you're doing something that's not working for her, she'll tell you, any good musician will change and adapt. Finding out what the artist wants for their song or on their project is important. Joni was the same way. Most people don't even think about this, but Joni Mitchell could have been a great drummer. She has an incredible sense of time. Watch her play dulcimer or acoustic guitar, watch how she comes down and hits a back beat after every stroke you could put a metronome to it, it's absolutely flawless. Playing her music was so easy because she has this internal clock that was just so easy to get inside of. I learned the same thing from James, we spent a lot of days, months, and years on the road and in the studio. I played on all of James's early albums, *Flag* was the last full album I did. I can't express enough how much I appreciate his friendship and being a part of his music. I miss playing with him, but I understand that times change. James has an amazing line-up playing with him now, and the records they make together are wonderful. I'm just thankful that I got to be a part of a magical time and some iconic music.

MD: Both Carlos Vega and Steve Gadd were/are still essentially playing the parts that you created.

RK: That's really a testament to James not to me, I was able to create parts that fit James' songs, and James (and the world) got accustomed to hearing those parts. Carlos Vega left a huge footprint on that gig, I really miss Carlos, he had one of the deepest pocket's that anyone could have. Listen to Carlos' playing on "Ananas" (from James Taylor's *Hourglass*) he gets so

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deep into the pocket on that song, every night when I had to play that song, I tried so hard to get close to it, but I never was able to get it exactly the way he did, it's just amazing.

MD: I have to say that for a long time I didn't even realize that there were drums on Joni's *Blue*. Your parts are so transparent, and never call any attention to themselves, they are just so perfect, please excuse me for saying this, but the drums are almost *unnecessary*. What can you tell me about making that classic record?

RK: It was magical. I had been friends with Graham, David, and Stephen, and it was Stephen Stills and I on most of the sessions, Stephen is an excellent bass player. I think I only actually played drums on one or two songs, they might have been "California," or "This Flight Tonight" I'm not sure. You're so right, the drumming is subtle, and it's mixed just exactly the way it should be. I remember on "Carey," which is one of my favorite songs, there was a single conga drum in Studio "C" at A&M, and it had a crack in the head so it couldn't be tuned, but it had this beautiful kind of human sound to it, almost like somebody was playing their chest or their belly, and that's what I played on that song. Playing on any of those songs was easy because Joni's dulcimer and guitar parts were so perfectly in time. We were overdubbing on some things, and we played live on a couple of things, but it was a wonderful experience. It didn't take too long; I think I was

only in the studio for maybe two or three days.

MD: Have you ever had to tell a producer or an artist that you didn't think that drums were necessary on a track?

RK: I understand that question, and I know exactly what you mean. Usually that happens when you're doing a whole project with somebody and you're gonna be recording over multiple days and there's gonna be a lot of songs. For me to make that suggestion, I would have to feel it very strongly. If the artist puts sheet music in front of me and we're about to run it down and they haven't told me to lay out or they don't want drums on it, I have to make an attempt to give them something. If I'm feeling that a song might be better without drums, I would still *try* to come up with something that would be super subtle, the minimalist of the minimalist. If that bothered them, and they wanted something more complete or something more connected, then I would do that. But I understand that would be a very difficult thing to do.

I absolutely love Mary Chapin Carpenter and I've had the pleasure of recording lots of her albums, she's such a fine craftsman with her songs, and I could hear every one of them with nothing but her. But at the same time, it becomes a nice challenge. She usually has Glen Worf, Matt Rollings, and me in the studio; and we can always come up with something without getting in the way. But back to what you were saying, I could hear every one of her songs with nothing on them, just her guitar and her vocals.

The other day Leland and I were called in to record the James Taylor song "Long Ago and Far Away" for *The Simpsons*. It was interesting how they wrote out the chart, the drum chart was written out with what they *thought* we were playing on the original recording. I remember what I played, but it was just interesting to see the contrast between the two. They wrote a much simpler part. Many of the parts that I played were so ghosted that unless you really listen you can't be sure of what you're hearing. What you hear are usually the things that are accented, I could have played what I played on the original record, but that's not what they wanted, they wanted something with a lot more air in it, so you adapt. I ended up just playing what was written and everyone was very happy.

MD: Do you play a lot of ghost notes both live and on record?

RK: Yes, I have a thing that I kind of do, it's really involuntary, but I'm always letting go of the stick in my left hand. I'm playing and letting it go, I don't know why I do it, but I do it.

MD: Creating almost a legato buzz.

RK: My left hand is doing a lot of different stuff, and my hi-hat plays in the oddest places. I'm not one of those "every quarter note kind of guys." Because of that, I think there is a lot of ghost notes in my left hand that are more felt than heard.

MD: Does every singer-songwriter gig pull out the same drumming approach from you, or do you change drumming approaches between all of those artists?

RK: It's really hard to differentiate. You're talking about Carole King, James Taylor, Joni Mitchell, and Jackson Browne. During the 70s and 80s they were creating the soundtrack of everyone's life. That was a bigger influence on me than anything. Knowing that Carole King and Gerry Goffin had written some of the biggest hit records of all time; Carole carries so much weight, she's a professor of music and she has all the credentials to back it up. Working with Carole and being her friend is such an honor, the fact that any of my performances ended up on any of her records— I have nothing but gratitude for that.

MD: Everyone always talks about *Tapestry*, for good reason. But your playing on *Thoroughbred* is amazing. Can you tell me about doing that record?

RK: Thoroughbred is the first time that Leland Sklar, Danny Kortchmar, Waddy Wachtel, and I (the Immediate Family) ever played together on the same record, we're all on that one so that was that was very special. Anytime you could work with Lou Adler was special. Lou Adler was just as influential for all of us as Peter Asher was. Lou and Peter put our names on the credits and was always such a supporter of all of us, he hired us for everything that he was doing, his importance can't be overstated.

> I'm so fortunate, the artists that I worked with are just the creme de la crème. In in a 12-month period of 1970 and 1971, I played on Sweet Baby James, Tapestry, and Joni Mitchell's Blue.

MD: In the *Immediate Family* documentary, you mention how it was Peter Asher and Lou Adler who began the practice of crediting the musicians who were playing on the different records and songs. I found that fascinating, especially to me, someone who grew up reading liner notes to see who was playing drums on a record.

RK: Another person that doesn't get mentioned a lot with regard to my drumming is Dan Fogelberg. The albums and hit songs like "Phoenix," "Same Old Lang Syne," "Run for the Roses," and "Captured Angel" that I got to record with him are some of my favorite performances of mine. Why he's not in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame just befuddles me. I even produced his album *Exiles* with Niko Bolas, that was a lot of fun.

Probably one of my favorite records that I ever did was a Gene Clark record called *No Other*. Leland is on that too. Joe Vitale is on that as well; Joe and I would tag team on a lot of records.

MD: Speaking of Joe, when you played with Crosby, Stills, Nash (and sometimes Young) did you play behind each guy differently? It sounds like it.

RK: You *had* to play differently behind each guy, because that was a band filled with (depending on the configuration) three or four separate songwriters and each one of them had different influences. Stephen's music can have a real Latin influence in it, David's music can have a real jazz influence, and Graham is the one that's probably most like a singer-songwriter. Graham plays multiple instruments although most of his biggest songs are written on piano. But that's no different, you adapt to what the flavor of the song needs.

MD: You did a lot of the same gigs and split records with Rick Marotta and Andy Newmark, what do you think is the difference between you three drummers?

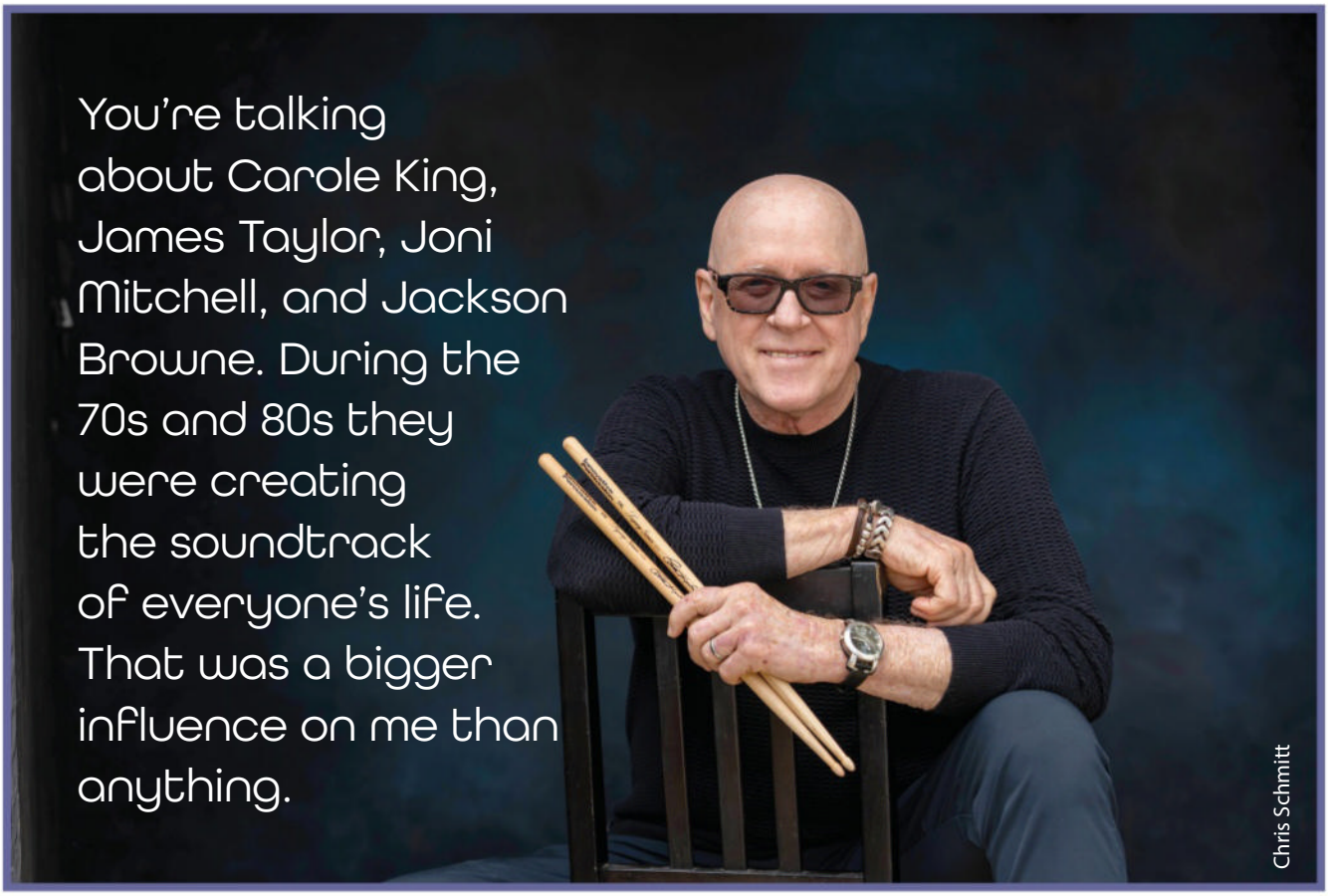
RK: You're right, we were all playing for a lot of the same people.

We all played for Carly Simon at different times, I don't know if Andy played with Linda Ronstadt, but Rick and I certainly did, and we all played for James Taylor.

I have a theory about why people sound different and why drummers sound different. It can be applied to any instrument really. People talk a lot about pocket, feel, and groove. I believe the reason that drummers (in particular) can sound so different from one another is the distance between *here* and *here*. (Russ demonstrated with his arm at the top of a stroke and at the bottom of a stroke when he would strike a drum or cymbal.) It's all in how we get from *here* to *here*. The motions might look the same but they're milliseconds different. The way that a person gets there and the time it takes to go from here to there, that's the pocket and everybody's pocket is a little bit different. It has to do with your heartbeat, your muscles, how your body feels when you play.

If you look at the difference between any internet phenom drummer and Al Jackson, the pocket is worlds apart. Some of the internet sensations are phenomenal. The speed, the strength, everything is amazing. But I think it's all about the space and the time it takes to lift your hand and lay the stick on something. That affects how you play eighth notes on a ride cymbal and how you play the hi-hat. We're not just "typing," we're hitting something, there's that space, that time, and that little bit of ballet that makes Rick Marotta sound different than me, it makes Andy Newmark sound different than Vinnie, and it makes Steve Gadd sound amazing all the time!

MD: How do you define the word "groove," what is a groove?
RK: It's an agreed upon space within a band, and the only way to identify it is to feel it, and everyone feels it at the same time.
MD: What about the "negotiations" within a band when it's not grooving.
RK: You try to identify what's egregious and then you (as a band) correct it. Hopefully it's not everything, usually it's one thing and you try to isolate what it is. More times than not, it's that too many things are playing at the same time and in the same area. You're duplicating something that doesn't need any duplication. Instead, what you need is the creation of more space. But then you're getting into ego and people's personalities and that's why being in a band is difficult.



MD: How tuned in are you to rhythm guitar players?
RK: I'm very tuned into rhythm guitar players. A rhythm guitarist can be a drummer's best friend. In Lyle's band, the great James Harrah is playing electric guitar with us now and James is absolutely stunning. I love playing with him, his rhythm playing is so spot on and it just makes my life so easy. I'm very tuned into guitar player's that play a lot of rhythm, that's why Danny Kortchmar and I have made such great music over all these years. Danny is a real pocket groove player!
MD: When you are creating a bass drum part, are you listening to the holes that the bassist leaves, or are you locking in with his part?
RK: I tend to like bass and kick drum parts that that are synchronized and that land more together than not. I think it

creates the right amount of space in the bottom to have them not be flamming and taking up all the area. Being able to play with Lee Sklar all these years has been an absolute blessing. Leland is such a lyrical player, he knows exactly what I'm doing and he's always landing with me. He's also playing these beautiful melodic parts within that, he's super special. The fact that I get to play with him every day is such a treat, I love him to death.

MD: Let me ask you about two of my favorite records that you have played on, first is Warren Zevon's *Excitable Boy*. But there are several different drummers on that record, Jeff Porcaro, Rick Marotta, Mick Fleetwood, and you. Who was making the choices of who would play on what tracks on records like that?

RK: That was probably a producer's decision. Waddy tells the story of how Mick wound up on "Werewolves of London" in the documentary. Different rhythm sections tried to play that tune, I did it with Leland, Jeff Porcaro did it with David Hungate, and for some reason it just didn't work. Guys like Jackson and Waddy can be picky about what they want. But they're always right! Sometimes it's that people just didn't "get it," or a song needs a different combination. Sometimes producers or artists have a vision of who they want on a song. I think I usually get called for "sensitive things," but I love to play funky stuff too.

> Another person that doesn't get mentioned a lot with regard to my drumming is Dan Fogelberg. The albums and hit songs that I got to record with him are some of my favorite performances of mine.

MD: What do you want and what don't you want from a producer?

RK: I don't want a producer to be uncertain. That can be very arduous because what ends up happening is they don't like anything. I want a producer to be kind and helpful, *and don't forget to order lunch*.

MD: The other record that I must ask you about is Lyle Lovett's *Joshua Judges Ruth*. That is the modern blueprint for playing on a singer-songwriter record. There is not a wasted note on that record, every note that you play means the world to the song, and your drumming just lifts and frames that entire record. What can you tell me about playing on that milestone record?

RK: That's one of my favorites too. Lyle is a really unique individual, and he is as unique as his songs. He's not just "one thing." He's a little bit country, he's a little bit rock'n'roll, he's a little bit blues, he's a little bit jazz… He's so many different things. Therefore, when you are recording his songs, you have a huge panorama of things that you can draw from. One thing I learned about Lyle is that he really doesn't like "normal stuff." He would write a song where you would normally play a cut time groove, but he wouldn't want that. He would want something different. So sometimes I had to find different ways to play things so it had a pulse, while I approached it in a completely different way.

MD: That sounds like a perfect gig for you, because you said that you feel strongly about creating something that you have never played before for a song.

RK: That's probably why I have been in Lyle's band for the last 23 years. With Lyle I have to open up my drumming some, because he is always fingerpicking, and he hates to hear flams between the drums and the fingerpicking. I have developed some interesting ways to leave more space for his fingerpicking.

MD: So we have finally gotten to today. After the band The Section (with Danny Kortchmar, Leland Sklar, Craig Doerge, and Russ Kunkel) happened in the 70's, releasing three great records (including the classic self-titled recording,) it has been a long time coming for The Section to add Waddy Wachtel and Steve Postell and become The Immediate Family. Now you are on your second Immediate Family record. How did this whole thing come to fruition?

RK: Danny Kortchmar had moved back to California from Connecticut and had befriended Steve Postell. Steve showed him around and incorporated Danny in some of the shows that he was doing, and Danny got his feet wet performing again. Danny was offered a record deal by a Japanese label, and he wanted to go in the studio and record an album for them. He called Leland and myself, and we were available, he called Waddy who was on the road at the time with Stevie Nicks, but he was able to make some of the sessions. We recorded the first album in three days at Jackson Browne's studio in Santa Monica called Groove Masters. After we recorded the first album, the Japanese label wanted Danny to come over and do some shows. Everyone was available, so Waddy, Leland, Steve, me, and Danny went to Japan and played the Billboard Live clubs and a couple of other places. While we were over there, we were having breakfast one morning and Kootch just said, "You know this is working out so good why don't we just make this a band?" I don't know if he already had the name, but he came up with the name The Immediate Family and it all just kind of stuck.

As we have already talked about, Waddy, Leland, Danny, and I have worked together in various different configurations for

> Being able to play with Lee Sklar all these years has been an absolute blessing. Lee is such a lyrical player, he knows exactly what I'm doing and he's always landing with me.

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over 50 years, so it was a very natural thing to have it come back around. The Immediate Family ended up being a guitar band with three guitar players, bass, and drums which is different from The Section which had an incredible keyboard player named Craig Doerge, so that's how it all happened.

MD: What are some of your favorite tunes from the first two Immediate Family records?

RK: I like "24/7 365," "Too Many Irons in the Fire" is a fun song, I co-composed "Skin In The Game," I think they are well-rounded records. We tried some different things on this new album. We used some keyboards and some different stuff on this one. On the first album we kept it to what the band sounds like, which makes it easier to recreate when you play live.

MD: How do you compose?

RK: All different ways. Sometimes I'll just work on lyrics, on "Tender is the Night" I had the hook guitar riff. I wrote that with Danny and Jackson Browne. I'm a pretty good rhythm guitar player, and I can play enough piano to write.

MD: What drums and cymbals are you playing?

RK: DW made a custom kit called the Contemporary Classic. Basically, it's a Classic kit, which is Mahogany and Poplar, but they constructed the Poplar plies in lots of very thin pieces instead of one 1/8-inch piece and I love them, they sound amazing. They made me another kit that's Mahogany and Cherry with a Santos Rosewood outside layer. That's the kit that I play with Lyle. That's a 23" kick, with 10, 12, 13, 14, and 16 inch toms. I don't use all the toms all the time, I've gone down to four pieces right now because it just so much fun to play the small kit. My cymbals are Paiste, I have some Innovations (which aren't made anymore,) I play a lot of Signatures, and I like the Twenty's, I have a set of those here at the house. The Big Beats are nice, and I'm playing the Modern Essentials with Lyle Lovett, I like those a lot. My sticks are Vic Firth, and my heads are Remo.

> I don't use all the toms all the time, I've gone down to four pieces right now because it just so much fun to play the small kit.

MD: We have talked about a lot of the classic records that you have played on, and some of your favorites. But what are some of your favorite records to listen to that you aren't on?

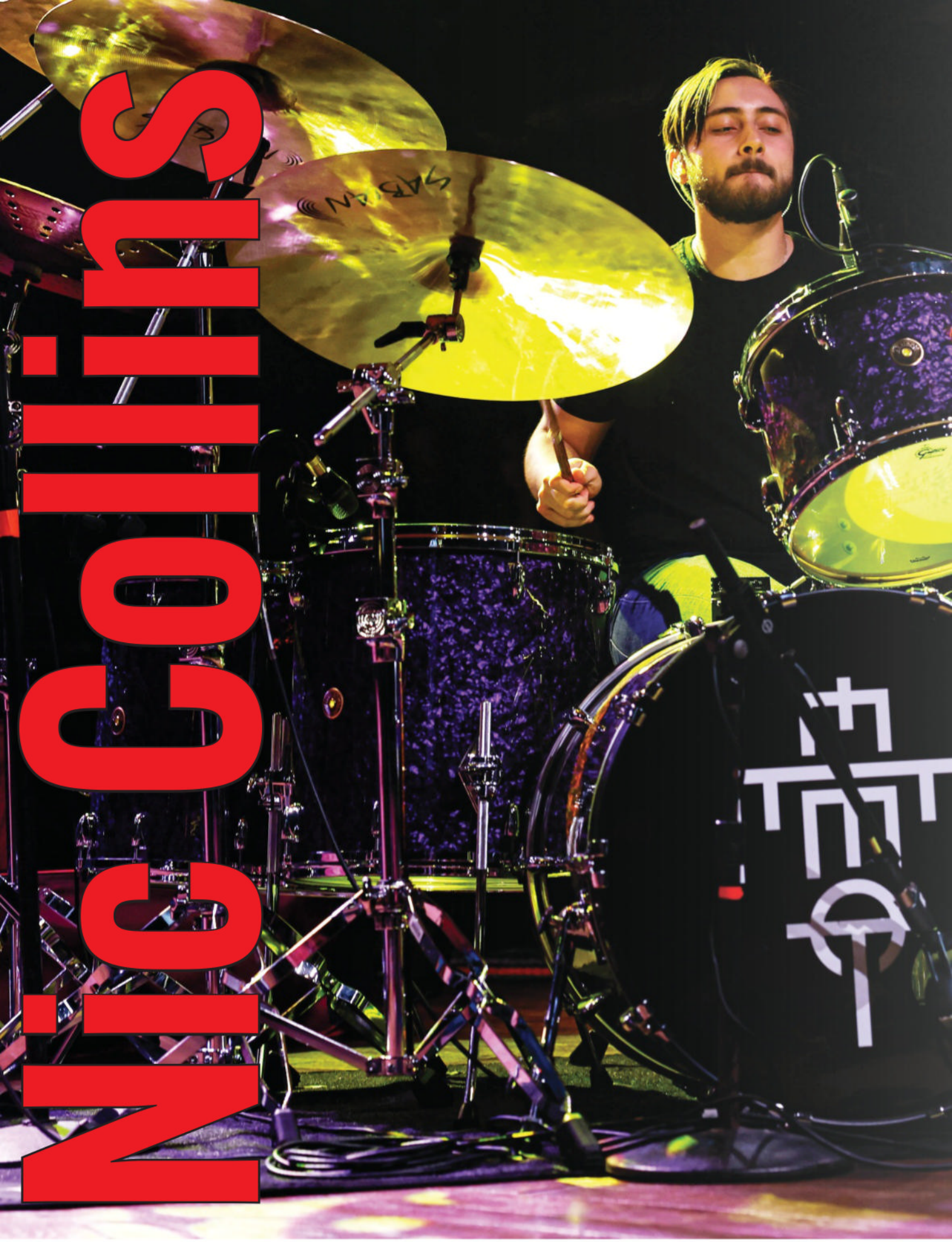
RK: I love Chris Stapleton and I love his band. I think Derek Mixon is one of the best drummers out there, and I think we have a lot in common. I really relate to the way that he plays Chris's music. I love Chris' songwriting; I love the sonic template that they create. Their music is so real and so unaffected. There's a band that I recently got turned on to, they're not new by any stretch, but I think they're phenomenal, the name of the band is King Princess. They have quite a few records out and they're brilliant. I think that the Tedeschi Trucks Band is probably the best band out there right now, I had the great fortune to produce two songs on a Derek Trucks Band album called *Joyful Noise* right when he and Susan got together. There's a Ry Cooder album called *Chavez Ravine* that I like, and anything that Jimmy Lee (Keltner) is playing on is always worth listening to.

MD: I agree. And anything that YOU (Russell Kunkel) are playing on is always worth listening to as well.

RK: That's very kind of you Mark, thank you!

Check out Russ's drummer profile page, at moderndrummer.com

Nic Collins



From Genesis to The Effect

By Mark Griffith

Nic Collins has had quite a start to his drumming career. He began by playing drums in rock bands and performing in clubs around Miami, Florida. Then he landed the gig drumming on Phil Collins' final tour. He followed that by playing drums on the Genesis final tour and touring extensively with Genesis guitarist Mike Rutherford in his band Mike and the Mechanics. Not bad for a 23-year-old drummer that is just killing it in the new band The Effect. If you haven't already figured it out. Nic Collins is Phil Collins' son, and as any child of a significant artist will tell you, a last name might open a few doors, but you need the talent to walk into the room, and you must have even more talent (and thick skin) to stay there. Nic has passed those tests with flying colors. Playing Phil's solo music, Nic walked the line of pop perfection. With Genesis, Nic's prog drumming DNA came to the forefront. And in Mike and the Mechanics, Nic Collins grooved hard.

In The Effect, music lovers and power pop fans will find a new musical obsession. Their high-quality and memorable songs are based around outstanding guitar riffs and edge of your seat guitar solos, world class drumming, and amazing singing. All of this is combined inside a harder aggressive edge that defies the norm of modern rock music *(whatever that is?)*

There are many questions… How did Nic and Trev (son of Toto guitarist Steve Lukather) meet and start a band? Did Nic's drummer-dad teach him to play drums? Does he play like his dad? But today, everything starts with the amazing new band The Effect.

MD: Where did the band The Effect come from, and how did it start?

NC: The band started with Trev Lukather, he put the whole thing together. It's really his band. He knew everybody, but none of us knew each other. The way it started was that (legendary) bassist Lee Sklar and (background singer to the stars) Amy Keys were both in my dad's solo band and had also toured with Toto. They had both been telling Trev and I that we needed to link up and that we needed to get together. Trev came to one of my dad's shows when I was playing drums back in 2018, but we never connected. After that we followed each other on Instagram but had still never met in person. Then in January of last year Trev happened to be in Miami for a TV show or something. Things went south on the show and Trev had some down time, so he called me out of the blue and we grabbed some dinner and hung out. We hit it off as friends and we connected on a lot of levels, in a lot of ways we felt like we'd lived parallel lives because of both of our dad's being who they are. It was a good vibe, but his last band ended a bit sourly, and he was very anti-band, but he does a lot of production work and he's a very good producer. I thought the extent of us working together would be that I was just going to play on a session of his, but then I went on the road with Mike and the Mechanics. I was gone for a while. He texted me one day and said, "I'm thinking of putting together an experiment of a band." It was like here's a bunch of people that I have known and that I've done cool things with, let's see what happens… The first track we did was "Unwanted," he sent me that riff, and I said, "Yeah dude I'm down!" The "experiment" eventually turned into The Effect. The crazy thing is that we recorded and mixed the first three tunes before all four of us were ever in the same room together. We got together last summer and played, and here we are less than a year later. Trev knew Steve Maggiora for a long time through Toto, and our singer Emmett Stang came up through an algorithm on Trev's Instagram page. It's been weird, but everything has been really smooth in a weird way. But it's all working, and it's been good fun and great music!

Trev would send me the most bare-bones guitar ideas with a map (intro, verse, chorus, solo, etc.) Then I would just sit in my rehearsal room and create my part. I would FaceTime him and we'd go over our notes, then he'd say, "Alright, record it."

MD: Let me get this straight, you guys had written, recorded, and completed three tunes together but had never all been in the same room? You're *definitely* a band of the 21st century.

NC: Being a "remote band" was weird. I tracked the whole album here in Miami, and they're all based on the West Coast. Trev and Steve are in California and Emmett is in Vegas. So we all convene in LA to rehearse. The way it ended up working was cool. Trev would send me the most bare-bones guitar ideas with a map (intro, verse, chorus, solo, etc.) Then I would just sit in my rehearsal room and create my part. I would FaceTime him and we'd go over our notes, then he'd say, "Alright, record it." I was amazed that he didn't want me to give it a few days, he wanted my first instinct, he didn't want me to overthink it. That is very different to what I usually do. I usually sit with my parts for a while, but for this music it just seemed correct to do it Trev's way.

MD: I talked to Chad Smith last year and he told me (producer) Andrew Watt intentionally wouldn't want him to hear songs because he wanted Chad's instant take on the drum part and didn't want Chad to think about it too much. He feels like that is how Chad works best.

NC: I totally get that. Another cool thing about doing things remotely is that I was able to finish my thoughts. What I mean is when you're all writing in the same room together, people can get very territorial. Our band is not like that, but I've seen it happen. In The Effect, I recorded everything I would do drum wise, and we decided to either pull the reins back or go even further, it ended up being really fun. After Trev and I laid down our parts they would add the keyboards, bass, the top line (melody) and lyrics. By the time it was done, I got to experience the tune as a listener because when I heard the final version it was totally not the song that I heard when I was recording it. It was different, but it's a nice process.

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MD: And based on the final versions of the tunes, it really worked!

NC: Thanks! This band was embracing what was different and ignored everything that I had done before with Genesis, my dad's solo tour, and Mike and the Mechanics. In my other band called Better Strangers (which is very proggy,) I end up almost having to overthink things. With The Effect, and Trev producing, he wanted my instincts on the track, and what I was feeling at that moment. Obviously, some songs require more effort in writing than others. But for a lot of them the day that he sent me the track was the

same day I wrote it and recorded the drum track. Trev is a great producer.

MD: Let's go through a few tracks, tell me about "Unwanted."

NC: We did that tune a little differently. "Unwanted" was literally the first song we wrote and recorded. "Unwanted" was the only tune that had a MIDI placeholder drum part, so I listened to that first. Trev came up with the riff while I was on the road, and everybody recorded "Unwanted" by playing over the MIDI drum track. That track had that drum riff and I used that throughout the whole song. It's a simple but cool lick that was already there. So when I got the track I wanted to stay true to the song, because they crafted the song around that drum lick, but I threw in my own personality. The bridge for "Unwanted" was left blank, so I just did this marching kind of thing with some tom stuff and fills. The fill going into the guitar solo is kind of like that Bonham "Stairway to Heaven" fill, but with the double kick. Actually, I think I ripped it from Tool's "Parabola," that fill is in that song too.

Obviously, The Effect is very groove oriented, Trev's dad played with Jeff Porcaro his whole life, so there's that influence of what's right for the song. I was always keeping Jeff's approach in mind, but I was also thinking about the Chad Smith and Taylor Hawkins groove-based rock drummers. This record is more about groove than the chops and prog stuff.

MD: What was your thought process on the song "Something Wrong?"

NC: When we did the record it was strange, as we have already

discussed. We didn't do this record "normally." A lot of bands will write a record and then they record it. For us, it was very simultaneous. Over the course of a couple months, we did some writing, then we recorded and did some shows, then we wrote and recorded some more. "Something Wrong" was done right in the middle of everything, we had already written and recorded a couple songs, and we had dialed in a bit more on what we wanted The Effect to be.

"Something Wrong" was a bit more syncopated in what the guitars and keyboards were doing, I tried to keep that syncopation with the drums as well. "Something Wrong" was also the first tune where I threw in some double kick on the guitar solo, I was just thinking, "Let's see what Trev thinks about this?" I love rock, I have started getting into metal, and I love progressive music as well. I wanted to see if the double kick would be accepted by the band. Trev just flipped, he loved it. I was really excited, so I laid into that for the whole section from the beginning of the guitar solo onwards. That section is almost like a pop breakdown with the China cymbal. That breakdown went into the double kick groove, but I played it with a pop attitude. That is one of my favorite tunes. But again, what I heard while I was creating the drum part, compared to what I was hearing when I heard the completed tune was totally different; it was a total earworm, and I couldn't stop singing it.

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MD: When did The Effect become a band?

NC: There was a point where I (kind of) knew what the band needed from the drums. The funny thing was that we never had a conversation about what genre, or what bands we wanted to emulate. It was literally here's what happens when the four of us do what we do and react to each other. So, by the time "Something Wrong" was done we had four or five other tunes done, and we all knew THIS is what this band is doing.

MD: What is it like to record tracks when you don't have the melody yet?

NC: It ended up almost coming off the same as if we had recorded in a more traditional way. It was very different because I do like hearing the melody so I can emphasize certain parts. Now that we've played this music live, songs have changed just slightly. There are parts in the songs where I can emphasize the

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vocal and the melody a bit more now. Doing it in the opposite way was cool because the guys actually started focusing in on some of my drum licks and writing around them. I really love the way we recorded this, it was a really fruitful process, but maybe for the second record we might switch it up and get some melody's in before I lay down the drums. It could be cool to know what Trev, Em, and Steve are writing melodically and lyrically while I'm creating the drum part.

MD: "Toxic Envy" is a pretty heavy track, what is going on with that tune?

NC: That was one of the last tunes that we recorded and is probably my favorite drum performance on the record. It definitely took the most time to write the drum part for "Toxic Envy." That's one of the heavier tunes on the record, by the time we did that song Trev knew that I was into metal and prog stuff, and he kept that in mind as he was writing the guitar part and the intro. The drumming on the intro with the toms was super influenced by Jimmy Chamberlin's playing on Smashing Pumpkins' "Bullet with Butterfly Wings." Then I started throwing in some fills which were (kind of) influenced by some of my dad's fills when he's coming down the toms. A big theme of the record was (for most of the songs) that the first verse and second verse are different. For example, the first verse might be in half time and the second verse would either be full time or double time (however you want to say it.) But they are different none the less. On the bridge of "Toxic Envy" I added a back-beat just to emphasize the guitar part. That took a while because I had no clue what the time signature was, and the riff is pretty complicated without hearing a backbeat. And then when we were trying to end each verse (which were different) and go back to the main riff or the bridge, I had to wrap my head around those slight differences. That tune definitely took me the longest to complete.

MD: The drum sound on that tune, and the entire record is amazing, was there any trickery going on?

NC: The studio where I recorded the drums for The Effect record, and almost everything that I have ever done, is called Brain Damage Studios. Yang from my band Better Strangers owns the studio, and by that point we really had everything about my drum sound really dialed in. I remember hearing the drum sounds on "Toxic Envy" and texting Will Brierre (who mixed the record) and asking, "Did you do something different, or did I just give you just better sounds? I jokingly asked him, "Is this when you tell me that you sample replaced everything?" But no, there's no trickery, everything was just more "dialed in" by that point, I am really stoked with the drum sound!

MD: What kind of drums and cymbals are you using?

NC: I've played Gretsch drums and Sabian cymbals my whole life, they've both been so good to me since the beginning. I am lucky enough that all the companies that I work with have been the first companies I signed with. I have a couple different Gretsch kits, one here in Florida and one on the west coast. The one on the record is a Gretsch USA custom kit with an 18x24 kick drum, 8 and 10" concert toms, 7x10 and 9x13 rack toms, 16x16 and 16x18 floor toms. I like to have all those different flavors, not every song has concert toms but it's nice to have that sound in case I want to add it. The set that's in LA is the same but it's a purple marine pearl Gretsch kit and it has an 18x22 kick. I used a bunch of different Gretsch snares on the record, but they are all 6.5x14. I have some wood snares, an aluminum snare, and a bell brass snare. I also have a few Noble & Cooley snares that my dad played. I change them depending on what the song needs. I have a bunch of Sabian cymbals, I use Remo heads, DW hardware, Roland electronics, and ProMark sticks.

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MD: Earlier you mentioned another band, I didn't know you had another band.

NC: Better Strangers is a heavier prog passion project that I have had for years, we're looking for a singer right now, so The Effect is getting most of my attention at the moment.

MD: As a drummer, your dad was obviously an influence, but where else do you come from, drum wise?

NC: Of course, my dad had a massive influence on me, not only as a drummer but as a human being. Some of my earliest memories are watching him on his *Final Farewell Tour* in 2004. I was like three or four years old during that tour, and watching that every night, not only did it make me fall in love with drumming, but it also made me fall in love with the idea of playing music live. I remember thinking, "THIS is what I want to do!" To see the people's reaction to the music and the show was amazing.

Of course, my dad had a massive influence on me, not only as a drummer but as a human being. Some of my earliest memories are watching him on his *Final Farewell Tour* in 2004.

I just gravitated towards drums naturally as a kid. There are some home videos of me at a year and a half old sitting on my dad's lap and just touching the kit. I was poking it with the sticks and seeing what the cymbals sounded like. Eventually my dad got me my own kit and I would just wail on it for hours every single day. I don't really remember my dad giving me any lessons, but I found some home videos where he was showing me what he considered to be Drum Secret #1 and Drum Secret #2.

MD: What were those Drum Secrets?

NC: I remember that Secret #1 was keep your hi-hat foot going when you're on the ride. Secret #2 was to keep the kick drum going during a fill. The great thing is that my dad always let me find my own relationship to the drums. When somebody is passionate about something and they have a kid, it's natural for them to want their kid to do the same thing. But if I had wanted to do anything else he would have totally been cool with it. Parents can't force anything on their kids, because a kid will naturally just reject what a parent is telling them to do. Dad just let me do my own thing. I lived in Switzerland for the first eleven years of my life, and when I moved to Miami, I really wanted to be a soccer player. However, I realized I wasn't very good at soccer, so I thought, "I've got this other thing (drums,) so I'll take that more seriously," and I started to take lessons. My dad told me to listen to Zeppelin's "When the Levee Breaks" and told me about how Bonham changed his life, and from there I just started going down my own path and finding my own favorite drummers. Growing up, Taylor Hawkins and Chad Smith were huge influences on me because it felt like they were "my guys." My dad had his guys like Keith Moon, Bonham, Stewart Copeland. But I felt like Taylor, Chad, and Dave Grohl were "my dudes." From there I was constantly evolving to different drummers that I've gotten into. My favorite drummer is Danny Carey from Tool. But I love drummers like Abe Cunningham, Gavin Harrison, and Jon Theodore from The Mars Volta who's now with Queens of the Stone Age. There is such a laundry list of different names, there are so many great drummers today. But I think the biggest thing for younger drummers is to never stop listening. There are so many great players out there, and the drumming community is so supportive. Now I like newer drummers from the modern metal world like Eloy Casagrande and Mario Duplantier. You're always learning, and you never know what's going to influence you. And as much as the metal and the rock guys influence me, I'm just as influenced by Larnell Lewis from Snarky Puppy and the jazz and the fusion drummers. The best thing is to be grabbing different things that will influence your musical palette.

I remember that Secret #1 was keep your hi-hat foot going when you're on the ride. Secret #2 was to keep the kick drum going during a fill.

MD: What music are you listening to today?

NC: I love this band called Karnivool out of Australia, Steve Judd plays drums for them and not a lot of people know them. They're progressive, heavy, but with killer hooks, they are amazing. Recently I was listening to Billy Cobham's *Spectrum* album, I love Yussef Dayes too. At the moment, I'm a prog and metal dude at heart, but then there's days where I listen to pop music or funk or fusion. I just like keeping everything fresh and in rotation.

MD: When you started taking lessons, what were you working on?

NC: I started to take drums more seriously when I was 11 or 12. Before that, I just loved playing. I was always playing along to either my dad's records or whatever was on the radio. But when I started taking lessons from Jean Pierre Espiritusanto it was about rudiments and improving my technique. That was a huge and important thing because I didn't have good technique at all, I just played for fun. I was so grateful to be able to home in on technique. My lessons were about rudiments, different Latin rhythms, and patterns like Bossa Nova, Samba, Songo, and the differences between all the genres. At the time I thought all of that was stupid, I didn't want to play Bossa Nova, but fast forward and thank God I learned that stuff. It was all about limb independence more than the actual musical genre. Just being able to isolate the limbs was so important. I joined some bands when I was young, I started really gigging and cutting my teeth around the Miami club scene when I was 13. I was playing at clubs and bars, and they would put an X on my hand so I couldn't order a drink. I also did a work internship at Resurrection Drums here in Florida when I was a senior in high school. I learned a lot about drums and tuning working for Jeff Lee.

When somebody is passionate about something and they have a kid, it's natural for them to want their kid to do the same thing. But if I had wanted to do anything else he would have totally been cool with it.

MD: How did you start playing with your dad's band from 2017 to 2019?

NC: It began with me playing drums with him at a couple of charity events, then I played at the US Open with him, then I did a full-fledged tour. That tour dramatically changed how I played drums.

MD: How so?

NC: When you play drums professionally it's not just about drumming. It's about how you have to conduct yourself to operate at the highest level.

MD: Talk about the difference between the two.

NC: Once we started touring it was great. I had no ego about it. I played the sold-out arenas and two weeks later I was playing to 100 people in a club with my band. I didn't care, I just wanted to play. I usually felt more pressure at my own bands' gigs because there was a lot more to worry about. Not only are you thinking about the drumming, but you're also worried about whether people are even going to show up… Is it going to sound good? Whatever… With my dad, all I had to worry about was the drumming, you know people will come to the show. Whereas when I'm in my own band I'm concerned about what people will think of the music, if people will show up to the gig, and all that stuff. I remember when the

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Genesis tour ended, we did three nights at the O2 Arena, and two weeks later I was playing with my band at some literary festival to 16 people.

Playing the arena and stadium shows taught me a lot about the professionalism behind everything, and I wanted to take that to the small gigs with my bands. Even now with The Effect, it doesn't matter if we're playing smaller venues or as an opening act in bigger venues, we are bringing that professional approach because that is how you do it. The dedication and hard work that it takes to get there is important.

When I did the last Genesis tour, I was watching and playing in a band that was at the finish line. While as an artist, I was at the start. I was seeing where I wanted to end up, and that taught me about what to keep in mind to try and make that happen for myself. With Genesis there is 40 or 50 years' worth of music and performances behind you. That's a lot to live up to. But it's about the work and dedication that has to be put in, sure there is some luck involved, but a lot of it is about the determination to make it happen for yourself. Many doors might open because of my dad and Genesis, but if you suck, you suck!

Even now with The Effect, it doesn't matter if we're playing smaller venues or as an opening act in bigger venues, we are bringing that professional approach because that is how you do it.

MD: Talk to the drummers that are reading this that are your age if not younger. What is professionalism in the music business?
NC: The most important thing about being professional is being reliable in a bunch of different ways. Not only is it showing up on time, it means showing up prepared. That was always my thing. Beginning with my dad's tour, I heard a lot of people saying, "It must be nice getting the gig because you're Phil's son." And to be fair, I understood where they were coming from. But I didn't get pissed off about it, I understand the whole "nepo-baby" thing. But I said, "Alright fair enough." Then I did so much homework that when I played the shows, I wasn't going to give those people any reason to say that stuff, that was my motivation. I'm very grateful that my dad hired me for that tour, but I told him that I wanted him to treat me like a normal band member, don't treat me like your son, and he was very up-front about it. If something was too fast or too slow, he would tell me, it didn't matter who I was. Through that, I learned about being reliable and making the rest of the band feel comfortable. When you're doing those kinds of gigs, when it's not your own band, you're playing a catalog of

music. When we were doing the Genesis tour nobody was there to see *my interpretation* of the Genesis songs, they're here to see and hear Genesis. I prepared enough so that the rest of the band (who have hired me to be there) had nothing to worry about, I was playing the parts. It was my job to make it that no one was worrying about what's going on with the drummer. There was a positive and negative to that as well. A lot of older classic Genesis fans wanted to hear versions of songs from *Seconds Out* or the original versions of songs. But those versions were recorded almost 50 years ago. I would have loved to do that, but sometimes you have to do the most recent version of a song. It wasn't about me, it was about my dad, Mike, and Tony feeling as comfortable as possible playing their music. Which, as you know, wasn't very straightforward music, it was very complex music. So being able to make sure that they can look at me and rely on me was important. Guitarist Daryl Stuermer, who played with Genesis and my dad, knows all that music better than anybody. I learned so much from Daryl about being professional, so when I got "that look" I knew where we were going. As a professional musician you must know that if something is about to fall apart, you can be reliable and confident enough in the material, and in your own ability, to make it right.

MD: It's the same as being the coach's son in sports. You must be twice as good as everyone else to even get off the bench. And if you screw something up, you are going to get yelled at twice as much. So how did you go about learning your dad's solo music and the Genesis music?

NC: I had grown up with my dad's material, but with Genesis I knew more of the hits like "Invisible Touch" and "Land of Confusion." I (kind of) knew those songs already, but obviously you need to go and study exactly what you're supposed to play, so I did a lot of homework.

> I usually felt more pressure at my own bands' gigs because there was a lot more to worry about. Not only are you thinking about the drumming, but you're also worried about whether people are even going to show up...

The minute there were murmurs that the Genesis tour might happen I started learning songs. My dad *eventually* asked me, "How do you fancy playing with Genesis?" And it took me half a second to say yes. From there, they created a list of songs and I started listening to stuff. The thing with the Genesis material was that I had to learn some of the proggier tunes, and I had to learn them from scratch. I always loved "Cinema Show" so that was the one tune where I told my dad, "I know I don't have any say in this, but we're doing this song! You can't not let me play 'Cinema Show.'" I have always been obsessed with that song. But (for example,) I didn't know, and had to learn "Firth of Fifth" from scratch. But for those tunes, it was always based around the most recent live version. So those songs were either based on the 1992 or the 2007 live versions. Then I'd go back to the original record to see what had been lost in translation over 20 or 30 years. I found different licks and ideas that I thought should come back, because it was important on the record. That was helpful for a few different tunes. But different songs required different approaches. For the song "Duchess," Tony Banks told me he was really grateful that I did go back to the original because he wanted more of that version. For songs like "Domino" I was playing more of Chester Thompson's part than what my dad did on the record because that's what was required. The tricky ones were some of the really complex prog tunes. There were three specific tunes that I learned but we never actually rehearsed or played.

MD: What tunes?

NC: The middle section of "Fading Lights," "Los Endos," and "Apocalypse in 9/8" from "Supper's Ready." I learned them and then we never did them. I asked the band to at least give me one playthrough so I could feel good about the amount of time, punching walls, and broken drum heads, that I put into learning them. The problem was because my dad was not playing drums, we couldn't do too much instrumental stuff, we had to strike a good balance.

MD: To take this question further, how did you learn your dad's drum parts, because it seems to me that many of his parts were very improvisational?

NC: You're right, they were complicated in the way that a lot of my dad's playing was very feel based, he improvised a lot of the time, that's what I always loved about his playing. He didn't sit at home and practice his parts**,** he would play them live and they would be different every night. What you hear on the live record *Seconds Out* is not what he played at the next show of the tour. It was all very different from night to night. So when I was trying to learn "Supper's Ready" I would ask him, "What are you doing here?" He'd say, "Just follow the riff, that's just what I did on that day."

MD: But that's what on tape and what we drummers remember!

NC: I know. When you're trying to learn somebody's improvisations it's a weird process. And sometimes I was having to make up for two drummers because a lot of the live Genesis prog tunes would be Chester and my dad playing off each other. Finding the right balance between two drummers playing on a live record and finding the thing that made the band happy and satisfied was tough. But I think I did the best that I could.

MD: What were the most challenging Genesis tunes that you actually played on the tour?

NC: "Firth of Fifth" was hard because of the time signature. But I found that the time signature doesn't matter, because you just listen to the keyboard riff. I asked the guys what the time signature was, and nobody in the band actually knew. *Apparently*, it's in 15/16 or 17/16, but to me the big thing was to just focus on the riff, not the time signature. How the song feels is more important than where the one is. The riff is what makes the listener want to dance. That tune was also hard because on the last leg I went back to the 92 version, and I added a couple fills. I found it really difficult to add more fills in those complex time signatures.

MD: Especially when you don't know what the time signature is and where one is.

NC: The other tough tune was "Domino" from *Invisible Touch*. It's a pretty straightforward drum song but it has a lot of triggered sounds. There are Simmons sounds and white noise and all that stuff. Genesis didn't play to tracks or clicks other than a few drum machine loops on "Mama" or at the beginning of "Domino."

So when it came to the second-half of "Domino" there was so much going on production wise. The difficulty was more about being as consistent as possible with the tempo and locking in with all the production that needed to be perfect. That was almost more stressful than the complicated songs. Another challenge was learning how to play live with triggers. It's difficult because it's very against your instincts as a drummer. I've always been a huge ghost note guy, but you can't do that with triggers, it's a whole different approach. You have to be so much more confident in every hit and there's no flutters or ghost notes allowed.

MD: What did you learn from the guys in Genesis or your dad's band? What were you told (by the band) that you needed to improve on?

NC: I loved playing with my dad's band because those guys are just incredible musicians and they're seasoned session guys. They have all this deeper understanding of music. But I kind of related a bit more to the Genesis guys because they were songwriters, and that's what I want to do, that's what I like doing. With Genesis it was more about what feels good than what was correct. Tony Banks is a freight train, when he gets going you either go with him or get steamrolled. It was amazing to see him play all those insane and complex parts, but I remember a funny thing he said when we were rehearsing "Musical Box" (which actually got cut from the tour.) That tune was recorded in 1971 on *Nursery Cryme* and I spent time learning all the big tom fills that my dad played. While we were rehearsing the last two or three minutes of the track, I remember Tony Banks saying, "Nic, this is great, but can we make it a little less 1971?" Those were his words, he just wanted to modernize it a bit.

Mike Rutherford is the rocker in the band. He was always game for whatever, and if something needed to be faster, he didn't care, he was just like, "Let's do whatever feels right." But the great thing is that Mike is such a unique bass player, learning his instincts and his cadences was fun. He plays so different from any other bass player I've ever played with. I really enjoyed locking in with him because he really tries to lock into the drums on a deeper kind of level. My dad and I talked about tempos a lot. It was always about what it feels like. He is very concerned with if something is too fast or too slow. Drum wise, he had certain songs where the fills just mattered more. On "No Son of Mine" there was one (almost) Stewart Copeland influenced fill that we worked on a lot. If I didn't do certain little things, he'd look at me. One time I asked him, "Why are you're so caught up over half a bar?" But I have always had the approach of: you'll only have to tell me once to fix something, the next time we play this song, it will be fixed, you never have to tell me twice to do anything!

But honestly, I learned a lot from just seeing the band work. Genesis is a very multi layered thing. I was not only playing with my dad, but I was also playing with a band that I love musically, I'm a fan of Genesis. But then I was also a part of their last lap around the field, and witnessing 50 to 60 years of friendship, it was just so special to be part of that. When we did that last leg

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of the tour, I was disconnected from a personal viewpoint. What was important was the three guys and their relationship and the people who have shown up and have connected to that music for so long. It was so inspiring to see that and to see your dad with his buddies, I will cherish those memories forever.

MD: I have to be honest and admit to you that your dad is one of my favorite drummers, from Eno to Brand X to old and new Genesis to *Face Value* up to *No Jacket Required*, I saw him live a lot, and learned all of his drum parts. What can you tell me about your dad's very unique approach to drumming?

NC: My dad's drumming pulls from such a big spectrum of music. In the 80s it was more pop and rock the less is more kind of thing. The notes mattered but the big tom fills and the sounds were important. As I got more into earlier Genesis and Brand X music, I started really hearing the jazz and all the fusion influences, talk about ghost notes! The thing that I love about his drum parts wasn't that they were "loud and proud" all the time. They were intricate and complex. You can definitely hear when he started getting into the fusion world. I like that different approach, and I also like hearing and watching his different tendencies.

MD: So many of his tendencies are very "un-drum-like," playing by the seat of your pants, and very improvisational. Not really jazz-improvisation based, just improvised as in "not thought out ahead of time." I always got the impression his drum parts-performances were merely "snapshots in time."

> The minute there were murmurs that the Genesis tour might happen I started learning songs. My dad *eventually* asked me, "How do you fancy playing with Genesis?" And it took me half a second to say yes.

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NC: Exactly, 100 percent. Some fills were planned out, but most weren't. The "In the Air Tonight" fill was a complete accident. There just happened to be a space there, I don't think there was actually supposed to be a fill there. He just did it, the drums came in, and it became this legendary drum part. I like how he played a lot of fills that were split up between his toms and cymbals, especially on the big concert toms. A lot of those fills sound really cool, but I didn't know what I was supposed to do when I heard them. I spent so much time watching the videos on YouTube and thinking, "Oh that's what's going on!" Then I would go back and watch different live versions and get more confused.

MD: You also did a Mike and the Mechanics tour too.

NC: I did that as a sub for their drummer Gary Wallace. Mike asked me to fill in, and it went great. The first thing Mike told me is that he didn't want me to play a big kit. That's when I came up with the custom-made purple marine pearl Gretsch kit. But the Mechanics gig was very different. I was so used to playing "drummer's music" and with Mike and his material it was about knowing the song and some important drum fills than it was about the drum parts themselves. Mike said, "I want you to be you, you don't have to play the same thing every night, just make it feel good**"**. It was also different because the Mechanics play to a click live, and I had never played to click live. That's a different and interesting approach, but it was so much fun, the guys in the Mechanics are great dudes and incredible musicians. That was the longest tour I've ever done, we did 34 shows in the UK alone, then we went to Germany, and we kept going from there.

MD: How did you get used to playing to a click live?

NC: It took a little getting used to, but after getting used to it I actually ended up liking it. We use a click with The Effect because there's some backing tracks. I like the click live because nobody could give me shit because they thought something was too fast or too slow. I think that's the most important thing to do when drummers start practicing; practice with a metronome, whether it's your rudiments or it's just playing. It's not only gonna improve your time but it's gonna make you comfortable being in the studio, recording, and playing live.

MD: So what are your big takeaway lessons from all of those experiences?

NC: LISTEN to the music more than *just* practicing it. When you're on your way to the supermarket or walking to school, listen to the songs you're learning. Don't just listen when you're

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behind the kit, most of the time things don't really sound the same while you're playing drums because you can't hear certain details. REALLY knowing a song and how it's supposed to feel is so much more than the BPM and the beat. Even with The Effect, we are getting together to do some live shows, and although I played on the record, I am listening to the record and hearing different little things.

MD: I'm sure the music world just *assumes* that as the sons of Steve Lukather and Phil Collins it has been easy for The Effect. Can you talk a bit about that aspect of the band?

NC: It's a double-edged sword. There are pros and cons. That could open a lot of doors, naturally it might inspire people to give you the first listen. But the downside is that you're immediately compared to somebody. Our dads didn't have to be compared to anyone. The label execs and the fans just heard them for who they were. Now when The Effect puts out a song the conversation immediately goes to the Toto and Genesis influence. Or listeners become disappointed that The Effect doesn't sound like Toto or Genesis. But at the end of the day if the doors open and you're in that room, you are on your own to stay in that room. And if somebody doesn't like you or if you suck, you'll be told immediately, it doesn't matter whose kid you are. Because of that, there's more motivation to put in the hard work. We're lucky, we came from a musical background, our dads aren't your typical "pop stars," they are actual musicians. So the idea of practice and working hard makes sense to us. We are motivated to go in and prove people wrong. I am so proud of the amazing career that my dad had, but that's not my career. I have to do my own thing and find my own voice. As a kid I got more caught up and bothered by the nepotism questions. You can't live your whole life basing it on the negative side of things, I like to talk about what's positive, I am grateful that I got to play with my dad and that there's a foundation of people who are interested in hearing The Effect. If people say, "I'm a big fan of your dad's but your solo stuff isn't really my thing," that's cool. But it's always more rewarding when people like your band and don't even know the story behind it. I just decide to look at the positives and approach it that way.

MD: All I know is that you guys are creating some great harder edged pop-ish music, and I love it. What is coming up for The Effect?

NC: We have released four singles and videos, and the record is completely finished. We've been doing everything independently, no manager, no label, no anything. It's literally just us four with the help of some very good people and friends that have been able to help us out. We have a European Tour in the summer, we're also going to be opening for Toto in Germany for a couple shows, and we've got some U.S. dates happening in May opening for Billy Idol in the Midwest. Obviously today, the more independent you can stay and the more self-sufficient you can be, the better. We really believe in The Effect and this record. We put so much work into it and we don't want to waste it. We want to put it out this music in the way that we feel it deserves.

Check out Nic's drummer profile page, at moderndrummer.com

Courtesy Dave Abbruzzese

Dave Abbruzzese

Gets Back to the Woods

By Jeff Ryan

In the critically acclaimed cult television series *Twin Peaks*, which was based in and around Washington state in the early 90's, Special Agent Dale Cooper stated, "When two events occur simultaneously pertaining to the same object of inquiry, we must always pay strict attention." That statement absolutely and ironically portrays not only what was happening culturally in and around Washington and Seattle in regards to the hit TV series, but also to the musical and cultural movement that would erupt from this area that shook the world and still resonates to this day.

The musical and cultural phenomenon in the early to mid 90's known as grunge not only swept the nation, but the entire world. The world would soon be washed over by a sea of flannel, cutoff jean shorts, and the lasting footprints of Dr. Martens boots. It wasn't enough that bands like Mudhoney, Soundgarden, Nirvana, and Pearl Jam were taking over the world. But for the first time maybe ever, drummers from most of those bands were the center of attention. And one drummer in particular, from a small suburban city outside of Dallas, TX, was taking center stage.

Dave Abbruzzese didn't start out in Seattle, WA. But he got there as quick as he could when fellow Texan and drum extraordinaire Matt Chamberlain gave him a ring about a new band called Pearl Jam that he'd been subbing in. Pearl Jam was quickly on the rise and desperately needed to find the right man for the throne. All of the elements serendipitously came together for Dave to be in the spotlight, and he shined bright and inspired young drummers around the world to be daring and bombastic. Abbruzzese played with a certain flare and style that was unmatched in that time period or since. The press and interviews had trouble staying on top of the frenzy. The ink was barely dry on the pages of magazines and newspapers before another article would come out. It was inevitable that Dave Abbruzzese graced the cover of MD for a feature in '93 after recording the *Vs.* album, which received multiple Grammy nominations.

Dave's combination of power and finesse would drive Pearl Jam for over four years. This brought him to all corners of the world, the re-recording of the smash hit "Even Flow," and the recording of the classic albums *Vs*. and *Vitalogy*. Then in 1994, Dave Abbruzzese departed Pearl Jam.

Dave took a hiatus from the spotlight for a few years but has never been one to sit on his laurels for too long, He has consistently stayed creative and busy. Over the years, he's contributed drum parts for Mike Dillon's Hairy Apes BMX, the Seattle bands Brad and Satchel, as well as his own multicultural grunge outfit Pseutopia. Pseutopia paid homage to the late Chris Cornell of Soundgarden by re-recording a version of "Seasons" for YouTube in 2018. Dave is currently involved in a multitude of projects as well as partnering with Woods Custom Drums to create his own Dave Abbruzzese Signature Snare which has just been released.

What about those two events that happened simultaneously? Well, it was more of a whirlwind of events consisting of music, culture, and fashion that took the world by storm. That storm started in the Pacific Northwest in the early 90's, and Dave's drumming inspired and raised the bar for all of us drummers, and that inspiration continues to this day. I was lucky enough to chat to Dave recently about all of his recent musical collaborations, his new signature snare with Woods Custom Drums, and to reflect back a bit on his time with Pearl Jam during the heyday of grunge.

MD: Since the early 90's, your influence on the drumming community has been inspirational and is synonymous with being highly energetic and creative, maybe even bombastic at times, but with tasteful craftsmanship as well. What does it feel like to know you've inspired thousands of drummers from all over the world for over 30 years in a multitude of ways?

DA: Thank you. It feels incredible. Being mostly self-taught, I found that the most important contributor to my growth as a drummer was the inspiration I derived from other drummers. To contribute to the journey of another drummer is part of the connection to the full circle that to me, defines success as a player. It's a big deal to me and something that I don't take for granted.

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MD: Your playing has always had a sense of power and finesse, can you speak to how your style has evolved from when you were young and how it's changed into what it is today?

DA: I would have to say that it is the musical choices that I make in relation to the song that have evolved. I play with more awareness of why I make the choices that I make behind my kit. I'm more mature as a person too. That definitely contributes to the dynamic of the creative process as well. Right after Pearl Jam, I was fortunate to have the opportunity to work with Roger Hodgson of Supertramp fame. I consider him to be one of the most prolific and talented songwriters that I have ever known. I learned a lot working with him.

MD: You and I chatted briefly last Fall in regards to our mutual friend Chad Lovell from the Dallas band, Course of Empire, who unfortunately is still recovering from a near fatal fall. I appreciate you taking the time to sign that drum to raise money for him, it meant a lot to the musical community here in Dallas. Can you describe your time in that band?

DA: I have always had an appreciation for Chad Lovell. We were in the same close-knit circle as young drummers, and I was tapped to come in and record with them by producer David Castell. He was producing a track named "God's Jig" for the Deep Ellum compilation album called *Dude, You Rock*. After the session, the band asked me if I would help them with some live performances that they had. It was a two-drummer band and they had a very focused and professional group dynamic. That was new to me at the time. I learned a lot from them. The shows were incredibly powerful and exciting. Great people doing great things.

MD: For the benefit of up and coming and aspiring drummers and longtime fans, can you describe your drumming influences growing up?

DA: My early influences still affect my approach to drumming. I was fortunate enough to be cutting my self-taught drummer teeth during an amazing time in music. My mom found me an old close and play, single speaker 45 rpm record player with a copy of the Beatles single "Birthday" inside, that was my start. I instantly began what was, and still is my process for learning, visualization. At that time, it was the greats such as Ringo, Hal Blaine, and Steve Gadd that were playing on my father's Barracuda car stereo. That was also the age that I started going to live music shows. I saw bands like Ted Nugent (Cliff Davies), AC/DC (Phil Rudd), Rush (Neil Peart), Triumph (Gil Moore), Thin Lizzy (Brian Downey), Lynyrd Skynyrd (Artimus Pyle), Judas Priest (Dave Holland & Les Binks), Riot (Sandy Slaven), Tommy Aldridge ... these were the first shows and drummers that I saw live, all between the ages of 10 and 14. Then there was FM radio...Bonham with Zeppelin. Steve Smith with Journey, Aynsley Dunbar with Jefferson Starship, Stan Lynch with Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers… I was also listening to the great K104, that station played all the pre-rap funk music and turned me on to the great groove bands like Cameo, Chic, James Brown, The Ohio Players, P-Funk, Sly & The Family Stone, etc. As I got older, I discovered the Frank Zappa catalog, which in my humble opinion should be a required listening course for anyone that wants to experience musical drumming. I was never a punk rock guy, I liked great musical rock such as Boston, Kiss, Foghat, Supertramp, 38 Special, Rush, and Zeppelin. Then there was the deep impression of Phil Collins when he was with Eno and Brand X. Every drummer of that era had their own special greasiness, it was created by their ability to play melodically within a song. They danced inside the music while simultaneously driving the groove, and provided little surprises and gems that only they gave their music.

My approach to drumming comes naturally, but that isn't to say that I don't work on things. I work very hard on arrangements and I always have a purposeful approach to the music that I am playing. That being said, I focus primarily on playing for the song. I always ask myself what it is that I can do for the song. What will make the song work for me as a listener having an experience. I don't consider what the song will do for me as a drummer. Rather, what can I (as a drummer) do for the song?

That question, or more importantly the fact that I still find the answer, is why I continue to be a drummer. When I find that I have no more interest or ability to feel that I can contribute to the music, that is when I will stop playing drums.

I was born a drummer, that is the only way that I can explain why drumming has always been a part of my life experience. As for the type of drummer I am? *I don't know.* In the studio and rehearsal setting, I react to the music that I am a part of. Live, I react to the give and take of the players and the audience within the frame of the music.

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Pearl Jam 1991-1994 was probably one of the most intense and physical live experiences I have ever witnessed. It was a straight powerhouse on fire. One that will never be equaled to the same degree. The music, the energy, the fans, the crew. The time was powerful and creative. I am proud to have played a part of the soundtrack that inspired so many. I wanted to be a successful drummer. As I alluded to earlier, being self-taught, that meant one thing to me and that is that I wanted to inspire people... Inspire people to dance, to sing along, to air jam, to pound on the steering wheel, to turn it up and drive fast, and to beat the shit out of their drum set in their teenage bedroom like I did. All along, I was hoping I would never have to stop dreaming, and I am so grateful that I have never had to stop dreaming.

MD: Were there local drummers in and around Dallas and Denton that inspired you in the late 80's and early 90's prior to moving to Seattle to join Pearl Jam?

DA: Of course. There's almost too many to mention! Dallas was a hotbed of accessible eclecticism back then, such a talent pool. There was the University of North Texas contingent, (North Texas State University it was known as back then), as well as Booker T Washington School for performing arts. Drummers like Matt Chamberlain, Earl Harvin, Bryan Wakeland, Chad Lovell, Kyle Thomas, Aaron Comess, Mike Dillon, Alan Emert, Brandon Aly... and many others. It was an awesome scene.

MD: Reflecting back on other ties back to Dallas and Denton, what was it like to go from playing with Dr. Tongue at venues like Dr. Smith's in Denton or Rick's Place, to joining one of the biggest bands in the world? Can you elaborate on that transition?

DA: Yes. It was more of a transition of personalities than of venues. Understand that I joined Pearl Jam before their first record was released. We piled into a 15-passenger van in the late summer and went off to play a club tour through the Southwest of the United States. It was hot and sweaty and we were playing small clubs. We were not placed into a sweet, cushy touring cycle. Pearl Jam had to earn our rise, and we earned it by playing our asses off in the same type of performance halls and clubs that I was playing with Dr. Tongue. It wasn't until we had begun making a name for ourselves that we were invited to take the opening slot in front of The Smashing Pumpkins on the Red Hot Chili Peppers tour. And even then, that tour was just beginning to ramp up. The 2500 to 5000 seat venues continued to get bigger and bigger!

MD: I don't think it can be stressed enough, how extraordinary it was in the early to mid 90's that we had so many amazing drummers all in incredible bands, and almost all of them from around the same part of the world, and growing in popularity all at the same time. Were you cognizant of that at the time?

DA: Absolutely. Being a self-taught player, I was feasting off of that amazing talent pool and soaking up everything I could!

Courtesy Dave Abbruzzese

MD: There was Dave Grohl with Nirvana, Sean Kinney with Alice in Chains, Matt Cameron with Soundgarden, Dale Crover with The Melvins, Matt Chamberlain, and of course right in the middle of all of that was you with Pearl Jam literally leading that parade down the street. Was there a camaraderie amongst all of you that were living and playing in and around Seattle?

DA: Yes. All of us have always treated one another with respect. Not so much around Seattle at the time, because we had all left on our tours and things blew up. But there was always an excitement and an almost fraternal sense amongst us drummers.

The Chili Peppers Tour had Chad Smith, the Pumpkins had Jimmy Chamberlain and there were shows with Nirvana with

Dave Grohl. The 1992 Lollapalooza tour was one of the most powerful gatherings. Also the Pearl Jam tours were blessed with great opening bands with amazing drummers! Jack Irons with the band Eleven, Jerry Gaskill with Kings X, we played shows with Soundgarden and others. It was a great time for drummers to enjoy drummers.

MD: So tell us about Woods Custom Drums and how that relationship started?

DA: Jeff Woods and I connected online, and he told me he made something for me. He sent me a 7x12 drum finished in "Vs. Orange." It was his way of thanking me for the music that I was a part of. His way of showing me his appreciation for the role that I played in the soundtrack of his life. The drum sounded exceptional. It was a mahogany shell and just sounded slamming! That began a dialog between us. At the same time, I was forming a relationship with another exceptional craftsman, Ronn Dunnett. One thing led to many others and the three of us became friends. It was cosmic. I trusted these two fellows with my secrets and my friendship almost immediately.

Drums are a very personal extension of who I am as a person. The drums I play are more than instruments, and Drum Workshop, Sabian, and ProMark have been more like family than gear companies. Bill Zildjian, Wayne Blanchard, Bobby Boos, Pat Brown John Good, Don Lombardi, Chris Lombardi, Louie Garcia, Garrison, Pat Brown.... those were my guys! They rode the ride and took care of me by being caring individuals that I love and respected. Jeff Woods and Ronn Dunnett are the same. Powerful artisans with vision and purpose, as well as great people that I genuinely am happy to know and call my friends.

I approached Jeff about the idea of working with me to create a drum that could represent my personal vision of what I wanted my 7x12 to sound like. And without question, he created the drum that uncompromisingly defines my 7x12 snare drum sound. The drum that he has made, and that I have approved to be my signature 7x12 snare drum is exactly what it had to be. My sound. My drum.

MD: Just from watching some videos online your signature model snare drum from Woods Custom Drums seems to really have a unique and amazing sound. Can you describe the specs that went into constructing it?

DA: The technical details are 7x12, six ply maple/mahogany/maple, and six ply reinforcement rings. It's finished in a Natural Oil/Wax, the bearing edges have an outer round / inner 45 degree. Dunnett R-5 throw/quick release butt end, Evans coated G2 batter, clear snare side. Woods polished script badge, special David Abbruzzese "Pro Model" round badge/vent, triple flange hoops, chrome over brass tube lugs. It weighs about 5 lbs. Each drum is hand signed and serialized by me. My quote that Jeff posted on his site is true, I said, "You have created one of the most perfect recording drums that I have ever played... and don't forget that at one time I owned over 100 snare drums while looking for that perfection. Please don't change whatever it is you did!" And he won't. This isn't a drum made for me and then mass produced cheaply for sale. Every one of my signature drums is hand crafted to the same exacting specifications. It may take a moment to restock because the initial run sold out very quickly. But I promise it is worth the wait!

MD: Are there any more collaborations in the near future with Woods Custom Drums or any other drum manufacturer?

DA: Yes. As I mentioned, Ronn Dunnett is someone that I respect a great deal. He is a full scope badass. He brought Milestone Percussion back into the fold. Those drums were a game changer back in the day and I can't imagine it being any different in the near future. The Dunnett Classic snare drums and George Way drums are amazing. Drum Workshop has always captured my sound, and their link to innovation is solid. With these companies in the realm of possibilities, there is no limit to what the future holds.

MD: Moving on to recent musical collaborations you've been involved in, describe the band Pseutopia and how that came to fruition?

DA: The members of Pseutopia reached out to me to do a tribute recording for Chris Cornell of the song "Seasons." The email they sent was incredible and the song was even more than I could've imagined. There was no way that I could not be a part of it. That collaboration opened a dialog that quickly became musical and lead to us working on more music together. A brotherhood quickly formed and it was only natural to continue creating together.

Mithun, Shyam, and Laji are three of the most conscious human beings that I have met in a long time. Their work with mental health issues and raising awareness for the plight of humanity in a positive way is a complete joy to behold. Add to that mix the fact that they are each incredibly talented and dedicated musicians and I couldn't be happier to have found myself in a creative pod such as this one! The guys and myself are all very busy with various musical and social pursuits, yet we find the time to create together every chance we get, and we will continue to do so.

Understand that I joined Pearl Jam before their first record was released. We piled into a 15-passenger van in the late summer and went off to play a club tour through the Southwest of the United States. It was hot and sweaty and we were playing small clubs.

I feel my connection to the music has never been stronger and my playing feels more natural and as powerful as ever. That being the case, I have setup a world class recording situation and have left myself open to contributing to as much music as possible.

MD: From a social media standpoint, it seems you're contributing tracks quite often for various artists, what other collaborations have you been working on recently?

DA: True that. I was involved in a marriage that wasn't correct and that lead to me losing touch for a while. Music has always come from a personal place to me. My disconnect from myself was very disruptive to my musical expression. I wound up seperated from the feelings that motivated me. Bernard Fowler, Stevie Salas, Jara Harris, and TM Stevens rescued me with a project called the IMFs. They shook the rotten fruit from my tree, and since then I haven't looked back. I feel my connection to the music has never been stronger and my playing feels more natural and as powerful as ever. That being the case, I have setup a world class recording situation and have left myself open to contributing to as much music as possible. My only prerequisite is how can I assist the music. It has been a very creative and rewarding time. I have been fortunate to contribute to 100's of songs with my drumming as well as mixing many of the projects. Some projects and players of note are the Quarantine Jams I produced with Erik Schenkman, Cici Powell, Bernard Fowler, Martina Rover, Benny Goodman, Jeff Fielder, Carmine Rojas, Joanna Connor, Jeff Nolan, James Mauri, Lynn Seaton, Aubrey Seaton, and many other amazing players. That all came about when we were locked down at home due to Covid and able to collaborate together. I produced and mixed versions of The Kinks "Powerman," John Hiatt's "Damn This Town," Jeff Beck's "Superstition" and worked on albums with The Lost Symphony, Erik Jayk & Wildstreet, Kind Hearted Thieves, Distant Divide, The Social Distance, Risley, Joanna Connors, Adrianna McDonald & Shy Blossom, and so many more (I'm just going to stop there.) It's safe to say that I have been very busy and am not planning on stopping anytime soon!

Courtesy Dave Abbruzzese

My latest addition to my musical activities is to have opened up a dialog with other drummers to share what the last 40 plus years of drumming has taught me. I've created a format in which I offer up my experiences behind the kit to other drummers via a one-on-one video chat that outlines a tutorial video that I create for those involved. It's been highly rewarding and a lot of fun. I enjoy being able to connect on a personal level with drummers from all over the world. We talk drums and have some laughs and then I get to revisit what I know and create a video for them to work with. A lot of snippets and videos from various collaborations are on my official YouTube channel **https://youtube.com/@FreeAssRecords?si=CI7gnU8LWJDH637g**

MD: Speaking of social media, I, along with thousands of other people on social media follow and interact with you on a daily basis. I'm sure this gives aspiring drummers and longtime fans a ton of positive energy from interacting with you on some level. Was that your goal when you started your social media pages, or did it just happen organically?

DA: What can I say? I'm a people person! (Laughs) It just happened. I interact. I'm a drummer. I'm not going to go into my thoughts and feelings about social media or the internet. However, I will say that I do what I can to be positive and remind people that there is more than one way to behave. I enjoy the online community that I find myself a part of. The world is a much smaller place and I appreciate the ability to participate in it. I only wish young people today would've had the opportunity to be young people a little bit longer.

MD: Being a part of such an iconic band as Pearl Jam for over five years during the epitome of what was considered the heyday of the "grunge" era as well as all of the musical contributions you have made prior to that and since, you have made an incredible impact on the drumming community. You also seem to always be creating and putting positive energy out into the world, which is a rare thing these days and much appreciated. Looking ahead for you, what's next on your horizon?

DA: What's next on the horizon? To be quite honest, I don't know for sure. I'm still paying attention to what the next step is going to bring under my feet. There are a lot of plans that are in the works. There are a lot of current things that are happening. I am also thankfully still developing as a human being and a player. I must add that I am grateful and always mindful of the opportunities afforded to me by the actions of my past. I plan on continuing on this uncharted path with as much focus and enthusiasm as ever. I am a drummer. I will always be a drummer.

MD: Thank you, Dave for taking the time to chat to me about all things drum related, it's been an honor!

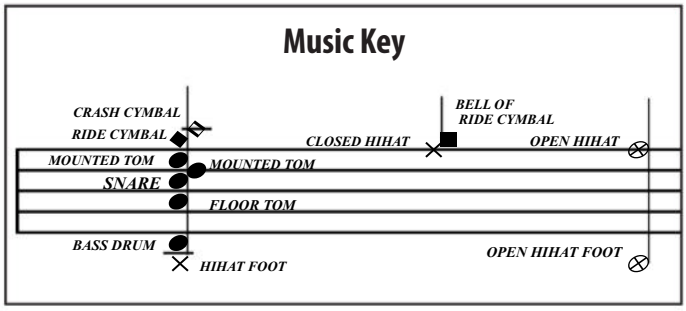
DA: Thank you, Jeff.

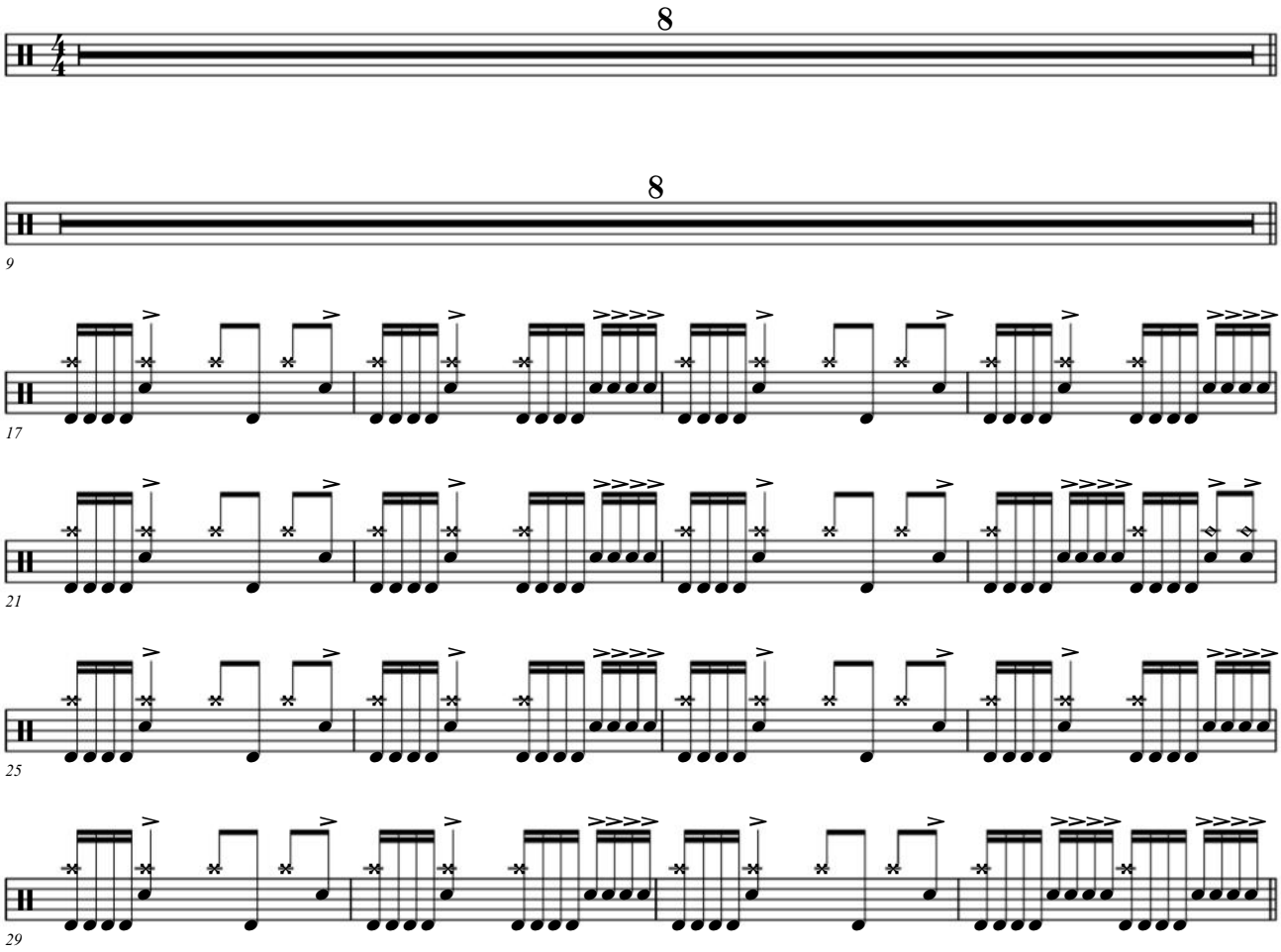
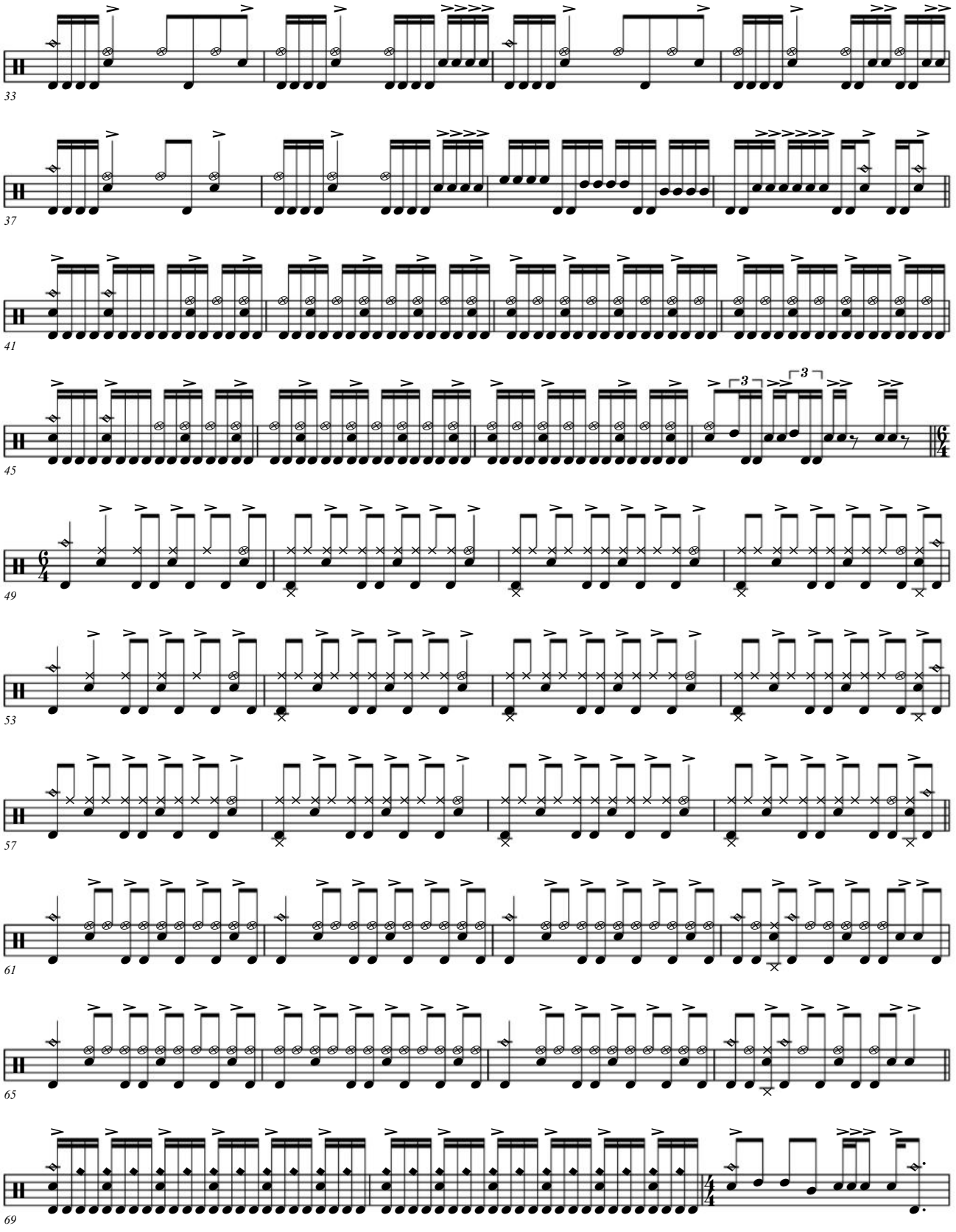
Check out Dave's drummer profile page, at moderndrummer.com

"Under A Glass Moon"

Transcription by Marc Atkinson

"Under a Glass Moon" is a progressive metal track by Dream Theater featuring drummer Mike Portnoy. Released in 1992, it's a standout track from their second studio album, *Images and Words*. The song highlights Dream Theater's musical prowess and boasts intricate guitar solos and complex rhythms. Despite maintaining a 16th-note rhythmical rate throughout, what stands out most is the dynamic use of changing time signatures and the strategic placement of snare notes that become an emphasis by Portnoy. It's an ideal piece for honing double bass chops, thanks to the seamless transitions Portnoy creates through each time signature change. Most importantly playing this song is a blast!





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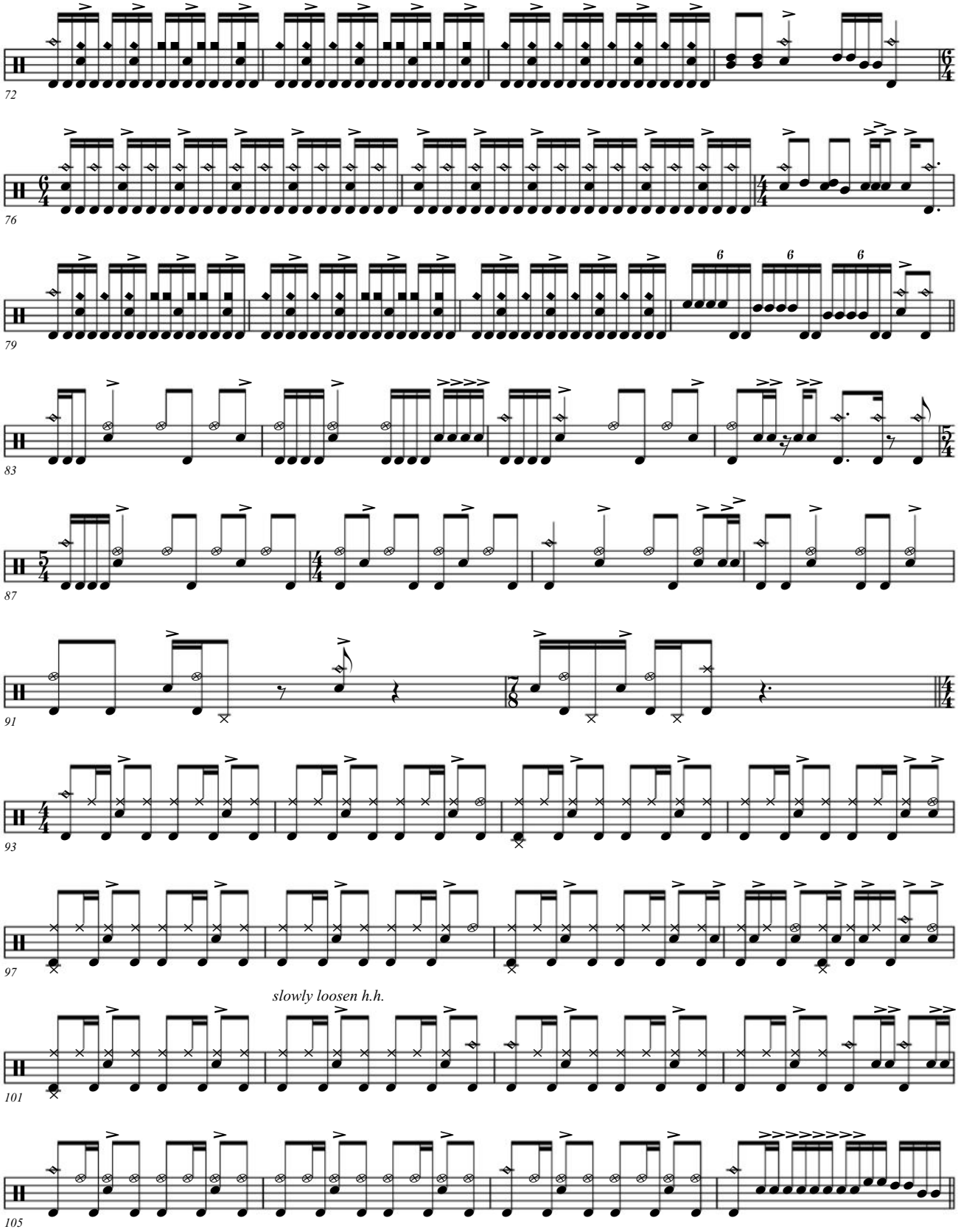
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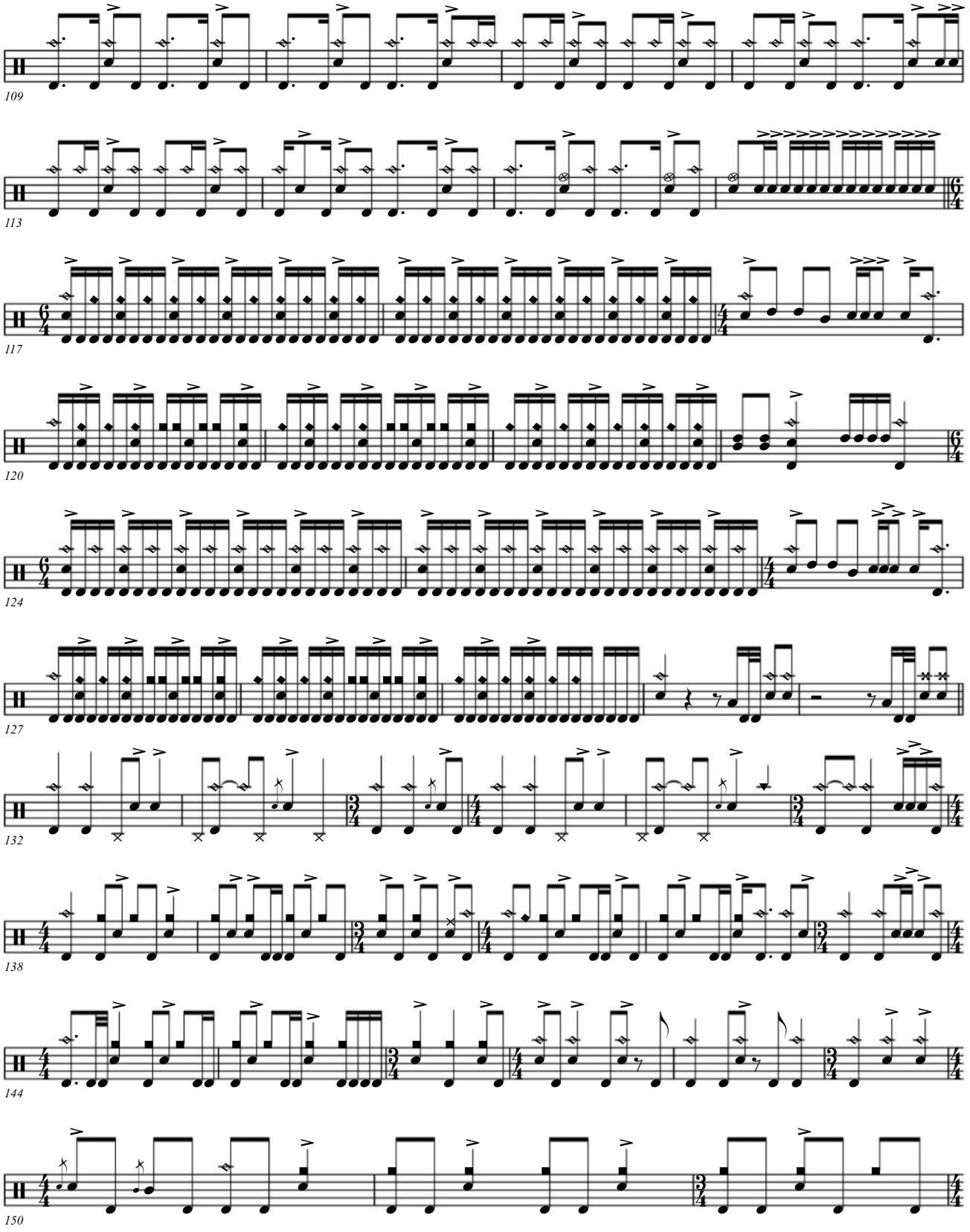
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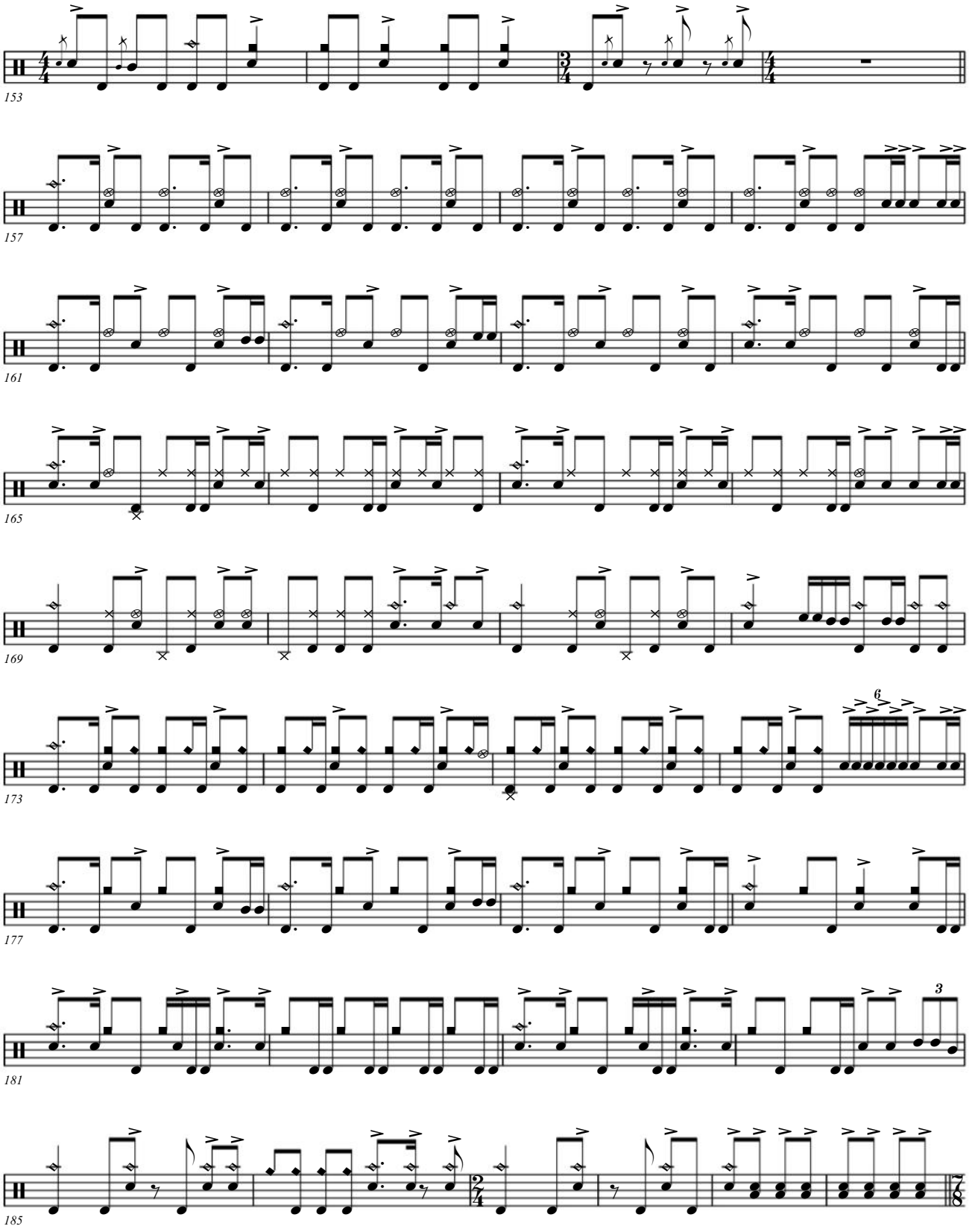
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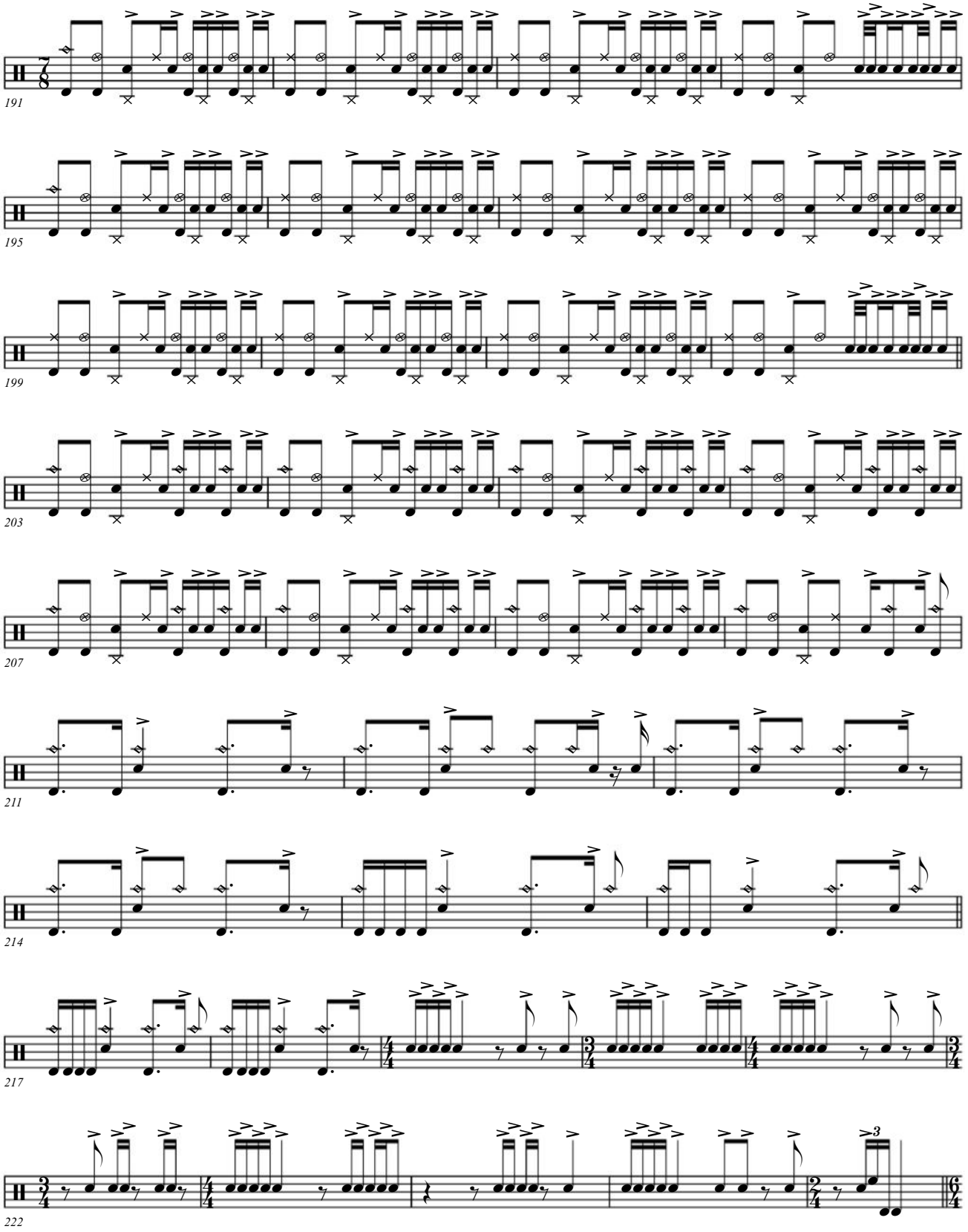
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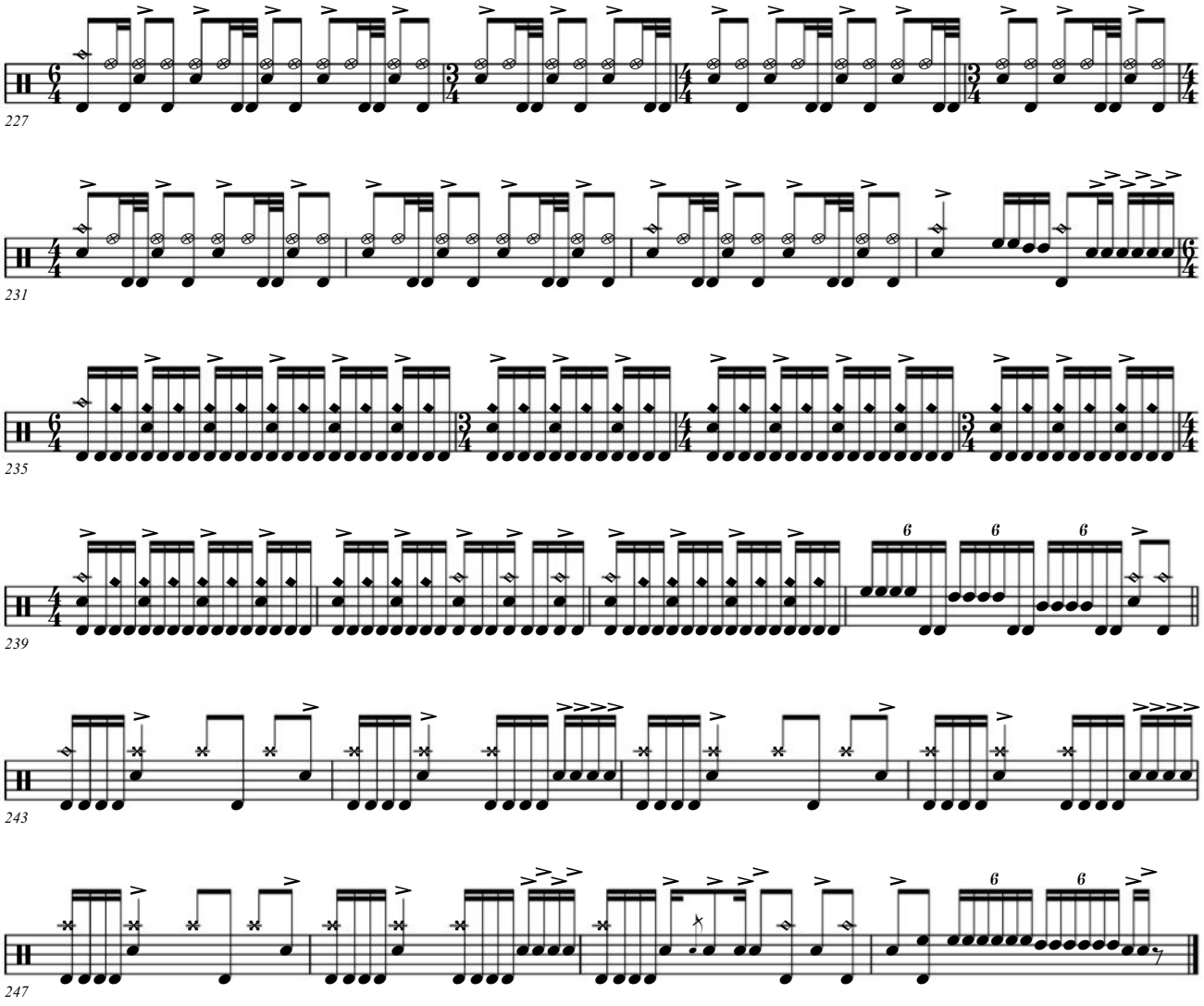


Marc Atkinson, a dedicated musician, honed his craft under the guidance of the renowned Gary Chaffee. Now calling Las Vegas home, Marc is on the brink of unveiling his labor of love—a comprehensive transcription book that promises to captivate music enthusiasts worldwide.

Check out Marc's *Modern Drummer* profile page at moderndrummer.com

Getting Started With Open Handed Drumming

By Chris Lesso

You might have seen me play and noticed I do things a little differently. By now, hopefully you know that "different is good," because there are no rules! The way I play is called open handed drumming, which simply means not crossing your hands. I discovered this way of drumming through asking better questions. *Why have things been done the way they've always been done, and what if we did it differently?* Evolution happens from the next generation challenging the ones that came before. *Could there actually be a better way?*

Imagine yourself playing the piano. With 88 keys in front of you, your left-hand covers the sounds underneath it and your right hand does the same. If someone asked you to play the notes on the left side with your right hand, you might say, "Why would I do that?" Because wasted effort will only slow you down. The goal on the piano is to reach all 88 keys effortlessly and efficiently as the music directs us to. It makes no difference if you're right-handed or left-handed, you don't need to flip the piano around. You use the strengths you have while working on your weaknesses, doing the best you can with what you have right now. *Why are the drums any different?* Yet few drummers dare greatly by choosing to play this way.

The drum set is just over 100 years old, and we have a long way to go, so we need you to drive the instrument forward by being on the cutting edge of future evolution. When you push the limits in the art of drumming, you evolve as well. Lead the charge by being different! This way, more of you comes out on the drums. Be proud to be one of the rare ones that embraces change.

At about nine when I started drumming, my teacher told me, "Everybody else plays drums cross handed, so do it like this because it's always been done this way." He meant well, but this kind of thinking holds back evolution and stifles individuality. By striving for freedom, we can bravely speak our hearts more authentically while sounding effortlessly like ourselves in the process. If we mindlessly imitate the past without asking, *"What if?"* we risk blending into mediocrity by sounding like just another of the faceless crowd. This is not what we were put here to do. The goal is to speak your voice on the drums, loud and proud!

Armed with these qualities, you can conquer anything. Later you can choose to play crossed, but at least by that time you've got a deeper creativity with a stronger weaker side working for you. With a strong foundation, you can make creative choices that reflect you, and not blindly follow tradition because, *"It's always been done that way."*

I've had many students that started open handed and then switched to crossed. Playing with crossed hands feels a certain way and might bring to life in you the heroes that you love. Remember, this is ART and EXPRESSION, and within that lens there are NO rules. This way you are empowered with a choice; a choice which I, like so many drummers out there, were never given.

Conform, Conform, Conform

We all have a trait buried deep within our psyche that helped our species survive our long evolution, that trait is to stay within the tribe. Hundreds of years ago, to be *too different* than the rest could cost you your living and prevent you from being a protected part of the community. Thousands of years ago, to be an outsider of the community meant survival itself was lost from the tribe, you would probably be taken down by extreme weather or starvation. For us humans to get this far over eons of time we *needed* to not stray too far from the crowd, living our lives only in what was considered to be "normal." This is good news because you are here and alive! But to stay with the safety of the crowd is an illusion because it prevents you from living out your true potential as a drummer and person. It takes grit to fight against this natural part of us every day, and to draw out our possibility and potential. Open handed drumming opens the door of maximum self-expression and allows you to leave as much of your fingerprint on your art as possible. It leads to:

- UNLOCKING YOUR CREATIVITY
- STRENGTHENING YOUR WEAKER SIDE
- FEEDING YOUR COURAGE

More of You

Getting into the habit of *differentiation*, means to be comfortable expressing what makes you unique, it is to be content in the discomfort of taking the path less traveled. Any of your favorites, from Harry Potter to Led Zeppelin to Muhammad Ali, all lived this ethos. A potent way to embody this attitude in drumming is through open handed drumming. This brings out more of you out on your instrument, revealing to the world what makes you beautifully strange and unique.

Are you ready to unleash your potential in drumming and life? Chris Lesso's LTR DRUMMING METHOD is for drummers who want to reach higher. Get your free intro course at **chrislesso.net/LTRDRUMMING**

Check out Chris's *Modern Drummer* profile page at moderndrummer.com

The Encyclopedia of Double Bass Drumming

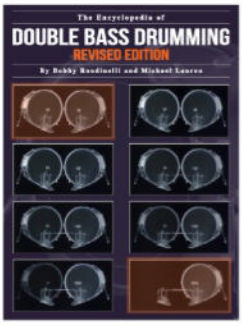
32nd Notes and 32nd Note Triplets

By Bobby Rondinell

In the new and revised edition of the *Encyclopedia of Double Bass Drumming,* Bobby includes nine new double bass drumming chapters. The new and expanded edition covers contemporary techniques such as bass drum double strokes, feet-only exercises, binary and ternary rhythms, "skiplets", beat turnarounds, the "ladder", and playing doubles with the hands while playing singles with the feet. These concepts will challenge your playing while expanding your double bass vocabulary. If practiced with intention and diligence, this material will help to prepare you for the demands of today's music. The 32nd note material in this section is advanced, but completely attainable for anyone who has completed the previous chapters in the book. Remember…

• Although many of the two-stroke 32nd note exercises can be played with one foot, two feet can be faster and more powerful than one.

• Counting is critical in this section. Count the 16th note subdivision. Start slowly and count out loud to ensure rhythmic accuracy.



• Most of the warm-ups in this chapter combine your hands and feet.

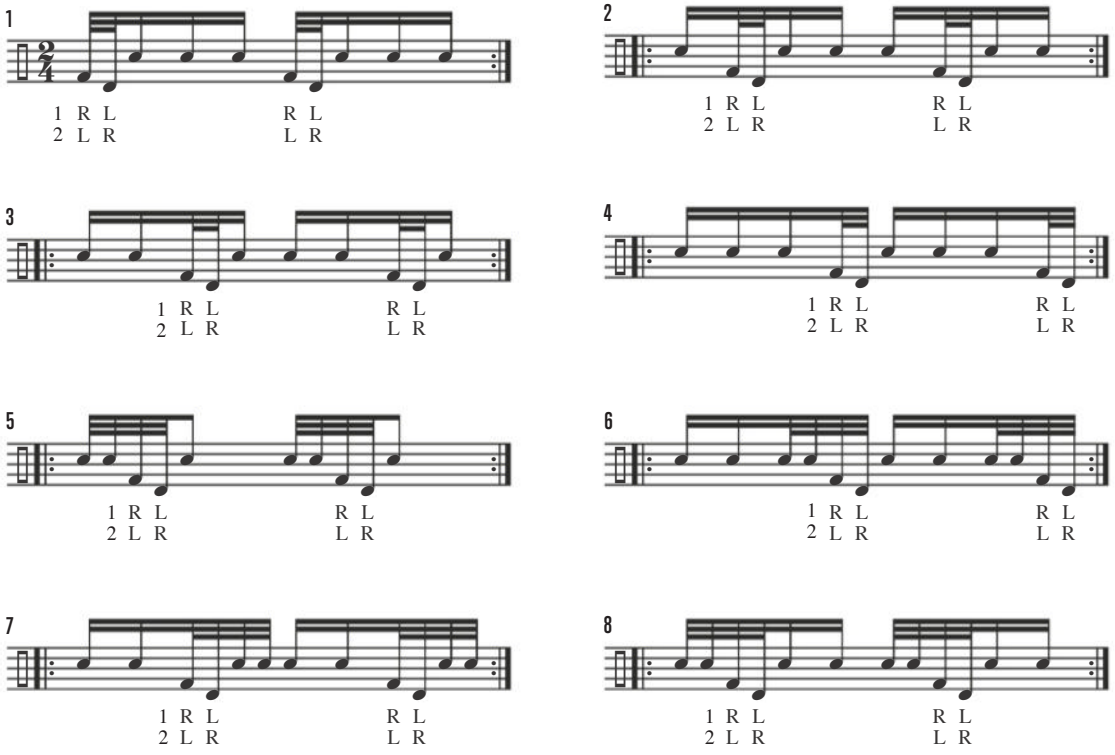
• The warm-ups also make great fills.

• Many of the beets are very challenging, but they are not impossible.

• All of the beats are playable and can be used at a variety of tempos.

• Although all of the exercises are notated with strong foot lead, triplet patterns can turn your feet around. That's why it's important to practice strong *and* weak-foot lead. The more versatile you are, the better drummer you'll be.

• The fills can be orchestrated between different drums. Split the hand 32nd notes between two different drums. Try your right hand on the snare and left hand on the high tom.

Warm-Ups

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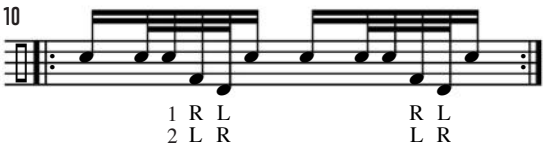
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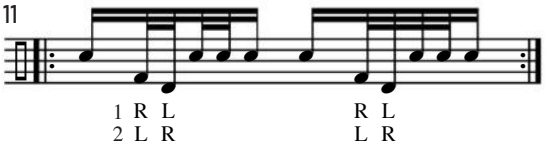
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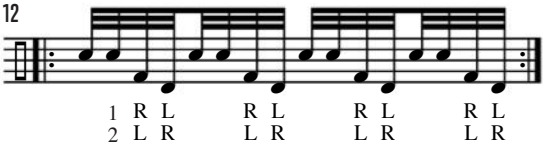

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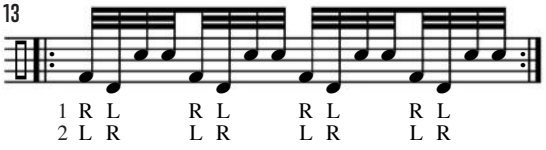

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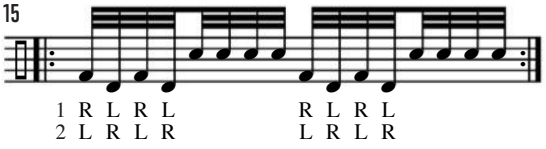

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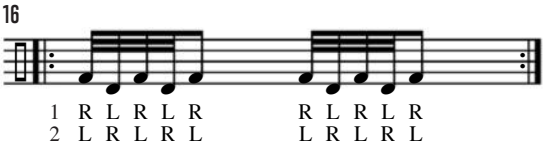
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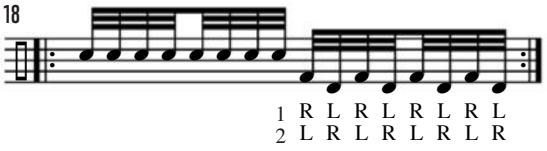
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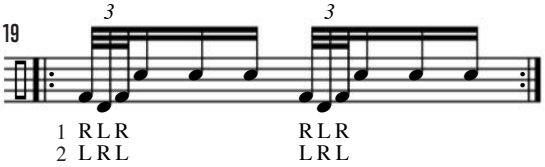

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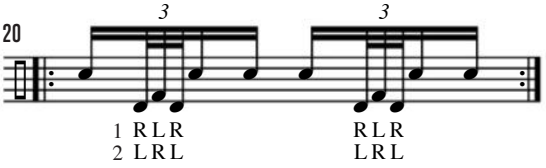
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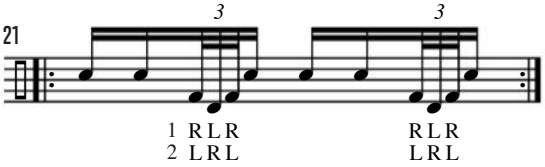
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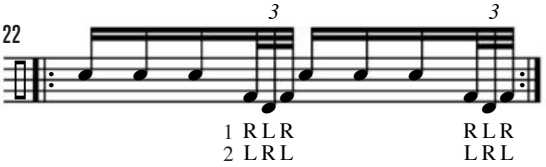
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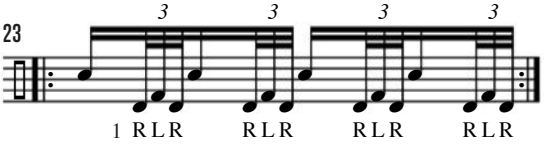
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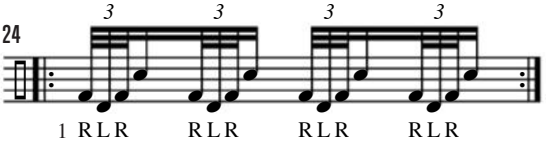

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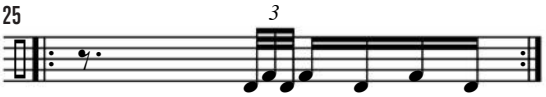
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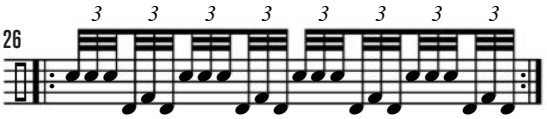
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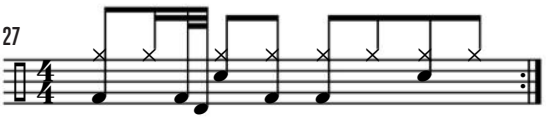
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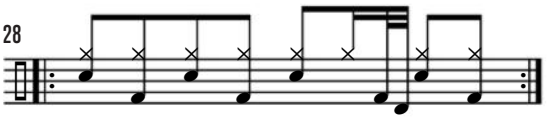
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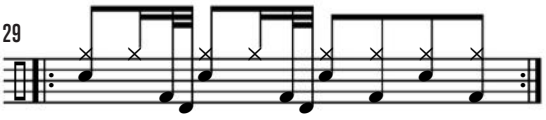
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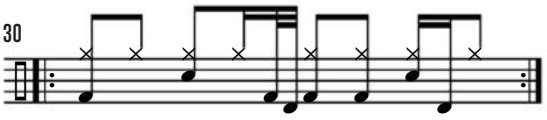
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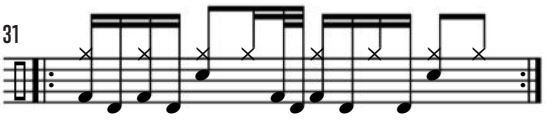

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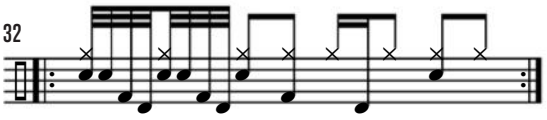
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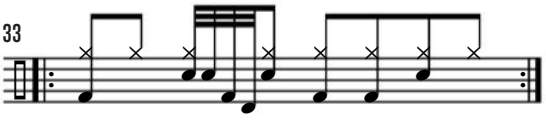
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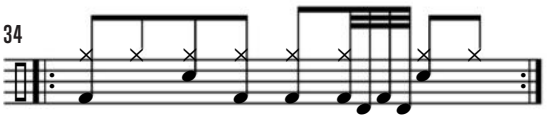
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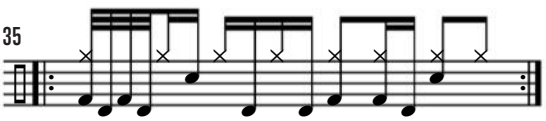
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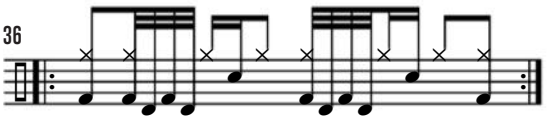
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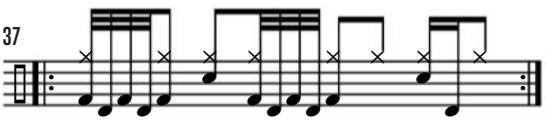
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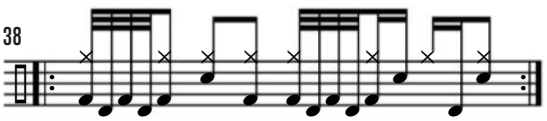
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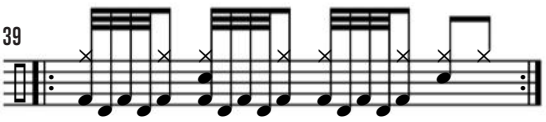
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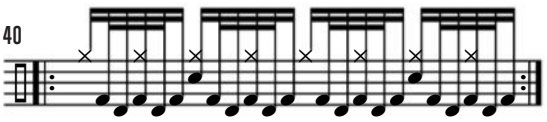
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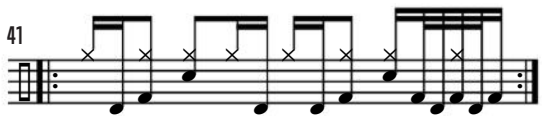
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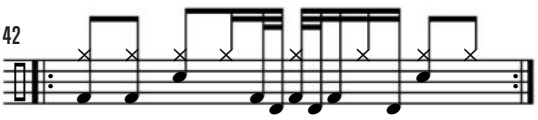
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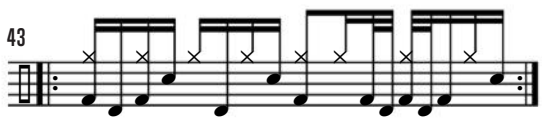
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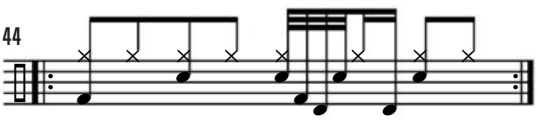
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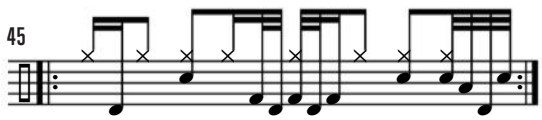
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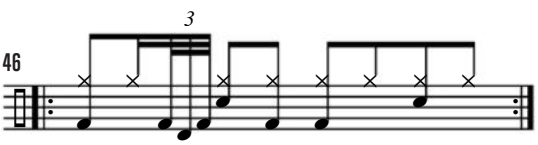
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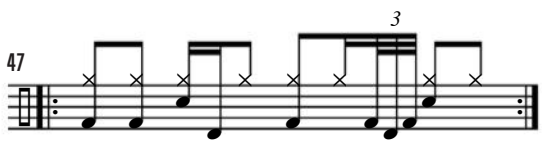
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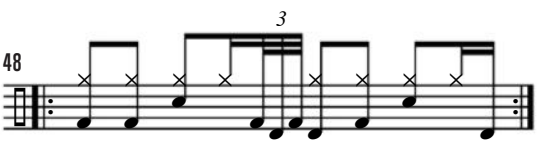

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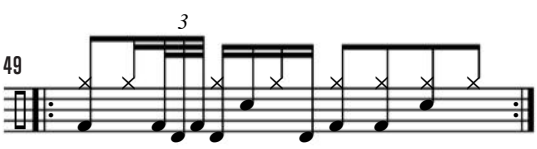
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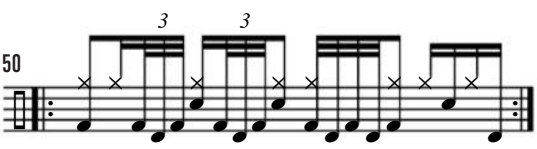

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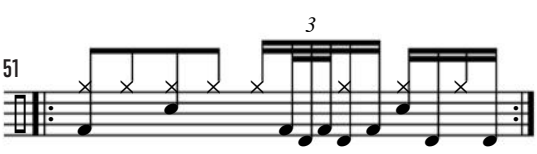

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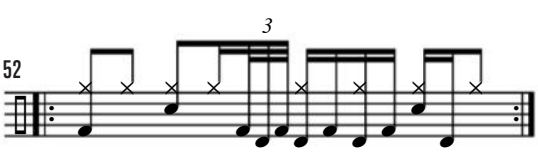

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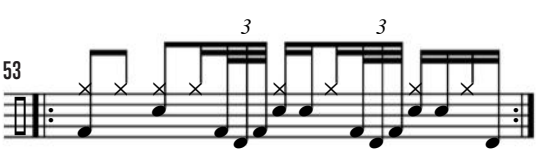

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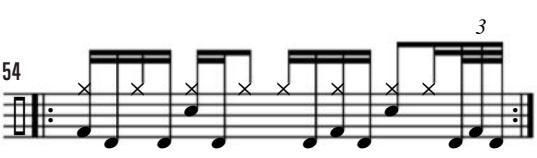
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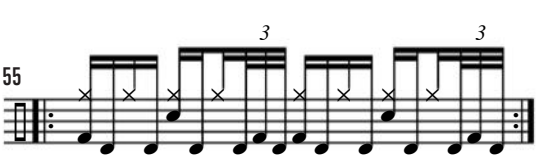

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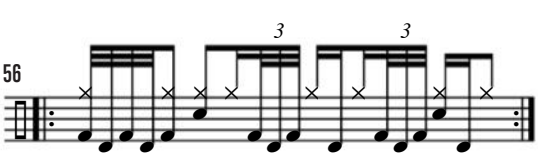

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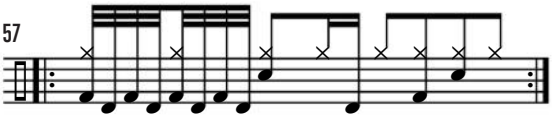
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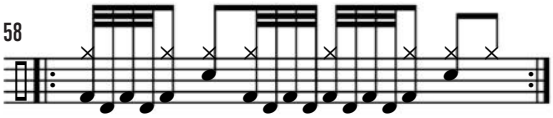

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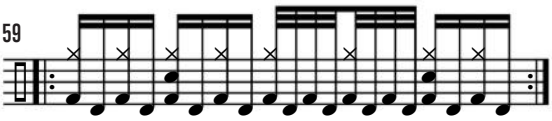

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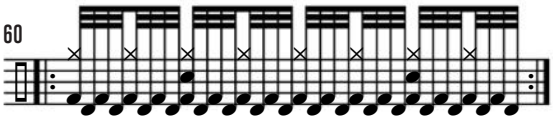

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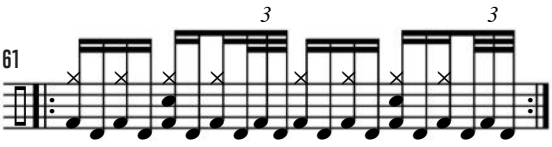

Fills

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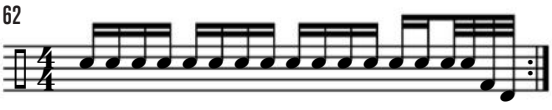
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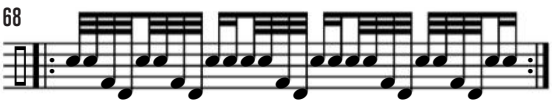
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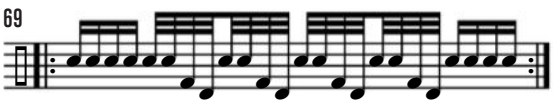
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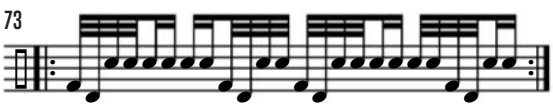
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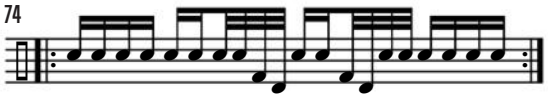
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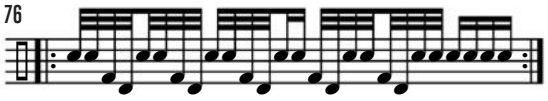
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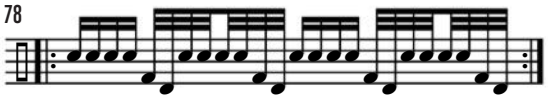
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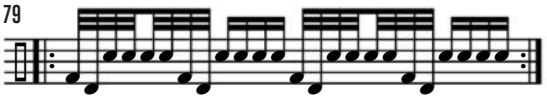
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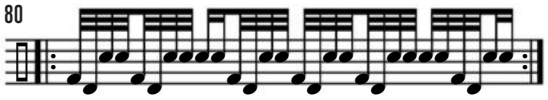
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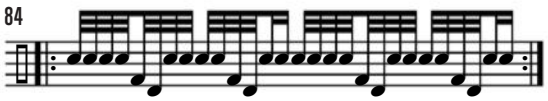
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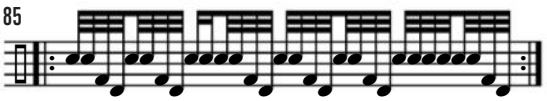
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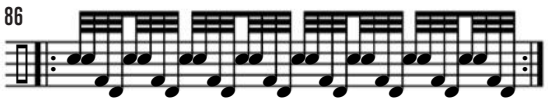
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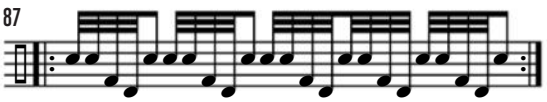
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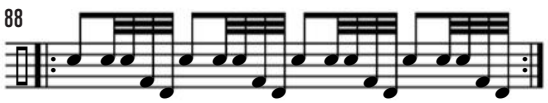
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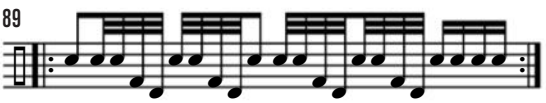
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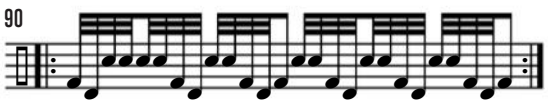
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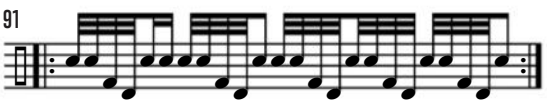
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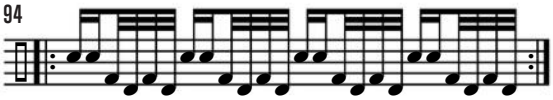
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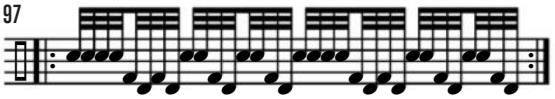
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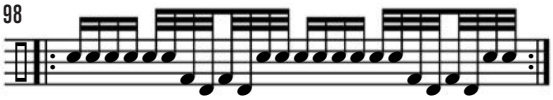
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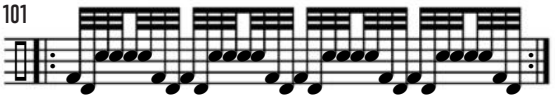
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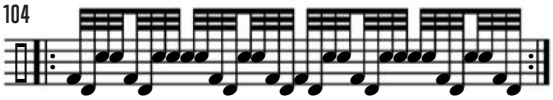
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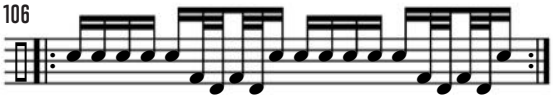
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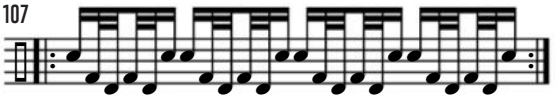
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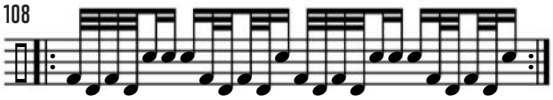
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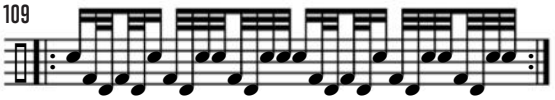

Check out Bobby's *Modern Drummer* profile pages and get your copy of *The Encyclopedia of Double Bass Drumming* at moderndrummer.com

The Bass Drum Owners Manual:

Mastering the Art of Weight Distribution

By Michael Packer

Has this ever happened to you? You are listening back to the audio of a track or video you just recorded. You are sure that the performance is clean and exactly what you intended to play. But as you listen, you hear extra notes being played on the bass drum. These notes are occurring either slightly before or after the notes you meant to play.

If this has happened to you, you are not alone. It's a problem that most (if not all) drummers must address at one time or another. Fortunately, in this article I'll discuss the cause of this issue and give you guidance on how to fix it. The culprit is weight distribution!

How your weight is distributed between your thigh and heel determines the rhythmic accuracy, volume, and sound quality of a bass drum note. When I explain this concept to students, I use the analogy of a snowball effect. If one element of weight distribution is wrong, it will cause the next several events to be misaligned and most likely lead to extra unwanted notes being played.

To begin understanding weight distribution, start with your foot in resting position on the bass drum pedal. The beater should be two or three inches off the head at this point. If you examine your weight distribution, you will notice you have about 90% of your legs weight on your heel and 10% on your toes.

Drummers primarily use four strokes and/or motions to play the bass drum. They are the toe stroke, the leg stroke, the ankle stroke, and the prep (preparation) motion. Before you play a leg (or ankle) stroke, you must put yourself in position to play the stroke.

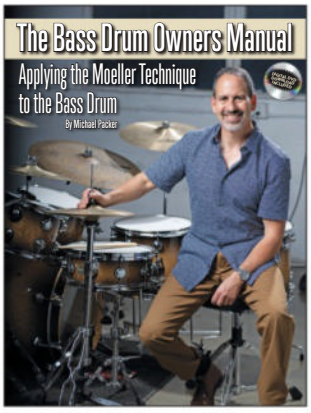
The preparation motion occurs just before you play a note. To perform this, as you lift your leg from the thigh, transfer the weight from your heel to your thigh and release the tension in your ankle. The tip of your foot will stay in contact with the footboard and be pointing downward as you lift into playing position. There should be very little weight (10%) on the toes during this motion, just enough to keep the toes in contact with the footboard. The bass drum beater should fall back as the heel lifts in to playing position approximately two inches off the ground, or parallel to the ground.

The leg stroke can be used when playing single notes at slow to medium tempos and all dynamic levels. I like to think of this motion as a whip motion (Moeller) that we commonly deploy in our hands. Here are the mechanics of the whip motion in the leg.

After the preparation motion the leg drops down, playing the stroke as the heel falls to the ground (or heel plate). As this occurs, redistribute the weight from your thigh back to your heel so the beater rebounds off the head, which results in a legato sound quality.

Legato is a big, open, and round sound that can be played at any dynamic level with any amount of attack you wish to apply to the note. The legato sound quality accesses all the frequencies of the drum.

If you perform the same motions and transfer the weight from your thigh to your toes the beaters motion will stop and remain on the head. This results in a staccato sound quality.



The staccato sound quality is a short, tight sound that features all attack and very little tone to support it. The attack raises the pitch of the bass drum, so it loses the low frequencies of the drum.

Both sound qualities are useful depending on the type of music you are playing. I believe every drummer should have the ability to play both very well. The trick to executing each of them is understanding and executing proper weight distribution of the feet and legs when you are playing and resting. Applying these weight distribution concepts will allow you to play any motions and leave the beater in the head or let it come off. It's your choice depending on the sound quality you desire.

If the beater does come off the head you should apply 10% of your weight on your toes, just as you started with. This will be enough weight to control the beater after the stroke. If the beater is not controlled after the stroke, you will most likely get one or two extra notes, or even a buzz. Successive single strokes are played in this manner and the toes should never leave the pedal.

Here's a great exercise for controlling the beater:

Place your foot on the pedal board with no weight on the toes. The beater will remain in its farthest position away from the head. Gradually apply weight to the pedal so the beater moves towards the head. Stop when the beater reaches approximately two to three inches from the head. This is a comfortable distance and should present no danger of playing extra notes. Now, play one leg stroke and stop the beater in this position. As you continue this exercise you will learn how it feels to control the beater in the resting position.

The goal for refining any technique is to give you the tools you need to clearly articulate your vocabulary on the instrument. It is important to remember, technique is a means to the end, not the end in itself. For further explanation and demonstration, watch **this video**.

The concepts discussed in this article can be studied further in Mike's book *The Bass Drum Owner's Manual,* available through *Modern Drummer* Publications and the *Drum Channel Method,* available at **Drumchannel.com** and Hudson Music.

Check out Michael's *Modern Drummer* profile page and get your copy of *The Bass Drum Owners Manual* at moderndrummer.com

Triplets with Accents

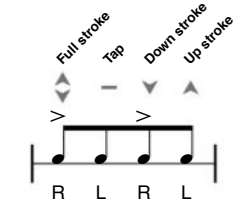
By Joe Morello

This section of triplets with accents is similar to last month's lesson of accent studies of eighth notes with accents. Both come from Joe Morello's outstanding book *Master Studies*. Again, strive for evenness of sound, paying particular attention to the dynamic level between the accented and unaccented notes. Many of the suggestions from last month's lesson can also be applied to this section as well.

- Play without accents— make sure each stick sounds the same, as though the exercise is being played with one hand.
- Vary the dynamic level (contrast) between the accented notes and the unaccented notes.
- When one handed stickings are used, fill in sixteenth note triplets with the opposite hand.

Here are some additional ideas:

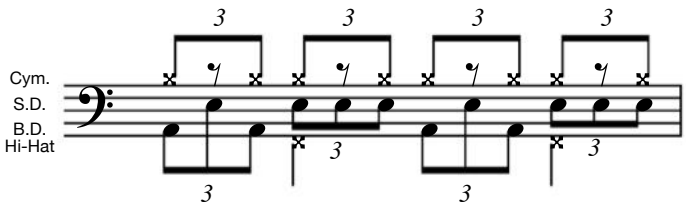
Arrow Notation Key



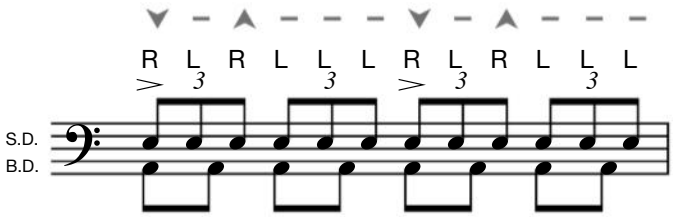
Up and down arrows	=	Full Stroke
Dash	=	Tap Stroke
Down arrow	=	Down Stroke
Up arrow	=	Up Stroke

This key is the same as used in the book *Accents and Rebounds* to show continuity in Joe's continuation of his teacher G.L. Stone.

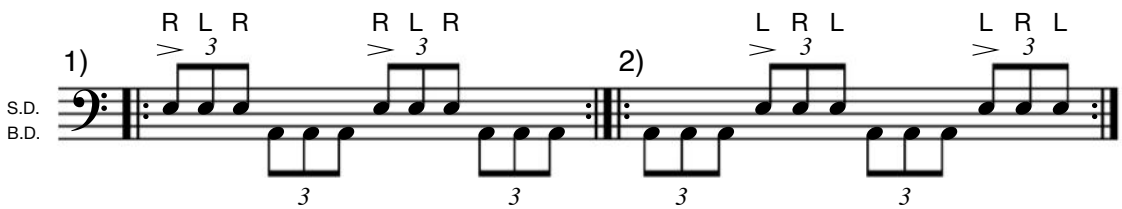
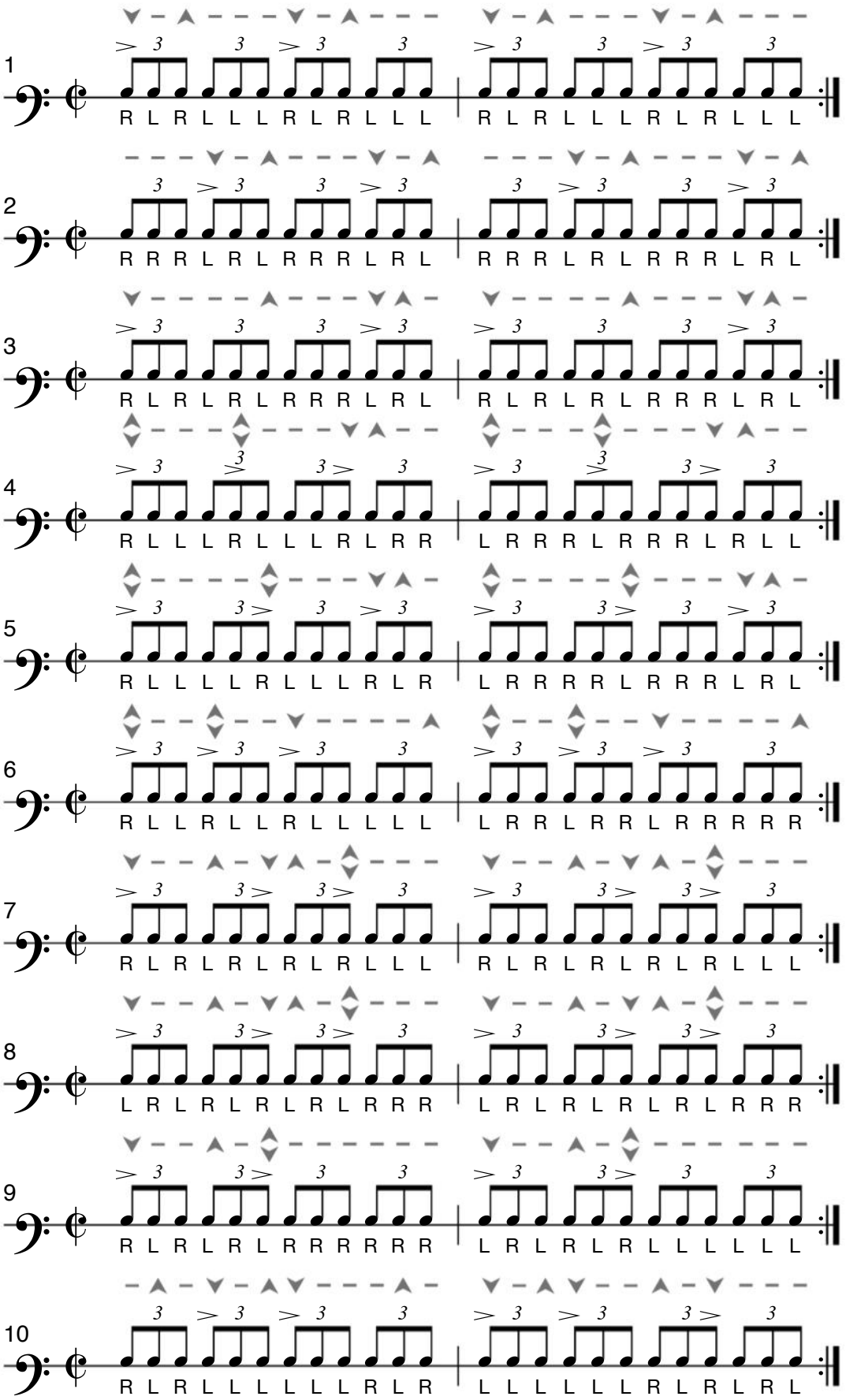
Rights on bass drum; lefts on snare; hi-hat on "2" and "4"; shuffle rhythm on ride cymbal.



Play straight 8th notes on bass drum against the triplets (two against three).



Transfer one-handed notes to bass drum.



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R L R L L L R L R L L L
2
R R R L R L R R R L R L
R R R L R L R R R L R L
3
R L R L R L R R R L R L
R L R L R L R R R L R L
4
R L L L R L L L R L R R
L R R R L R R R L R L L
5
R L L L L R L L L R L R
L R R R R L R R R L R L
6
R L L R L L R L L L L L
L R R L R R L R R R R R
7
R L R L R L R L R L L L
R L R L R L R L R L L L
8
L R L R L R L R L R R R
L R L R L R L R L R R R
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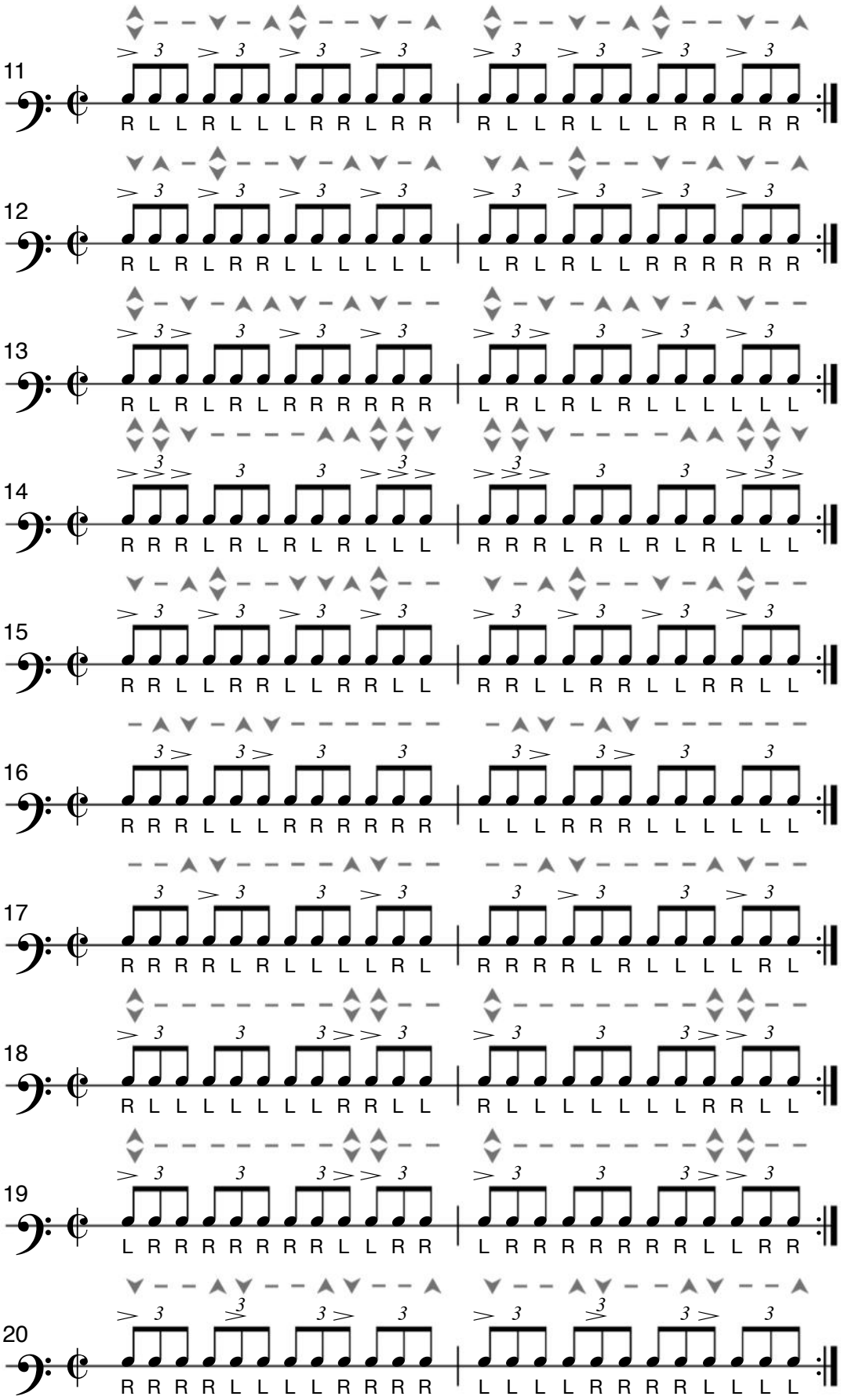
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R L R L R R L L L L L L | L R L R L L R R R R R R
13
R L R L R L R R R R R R | L R L R L R L L L L L L
14
R R R L R L R L R L L L | R R R L R L R L R L L L
15
R R L L R R L L R R L L | R R L L R R L L R R L L
16
R R R L L L R R R R R R | L L L R R R L L L L L L
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R R R R L R L L L L R L | R R R R L R L L L L R L
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R L L L L L L R R L L | R L L L L L L R R L L
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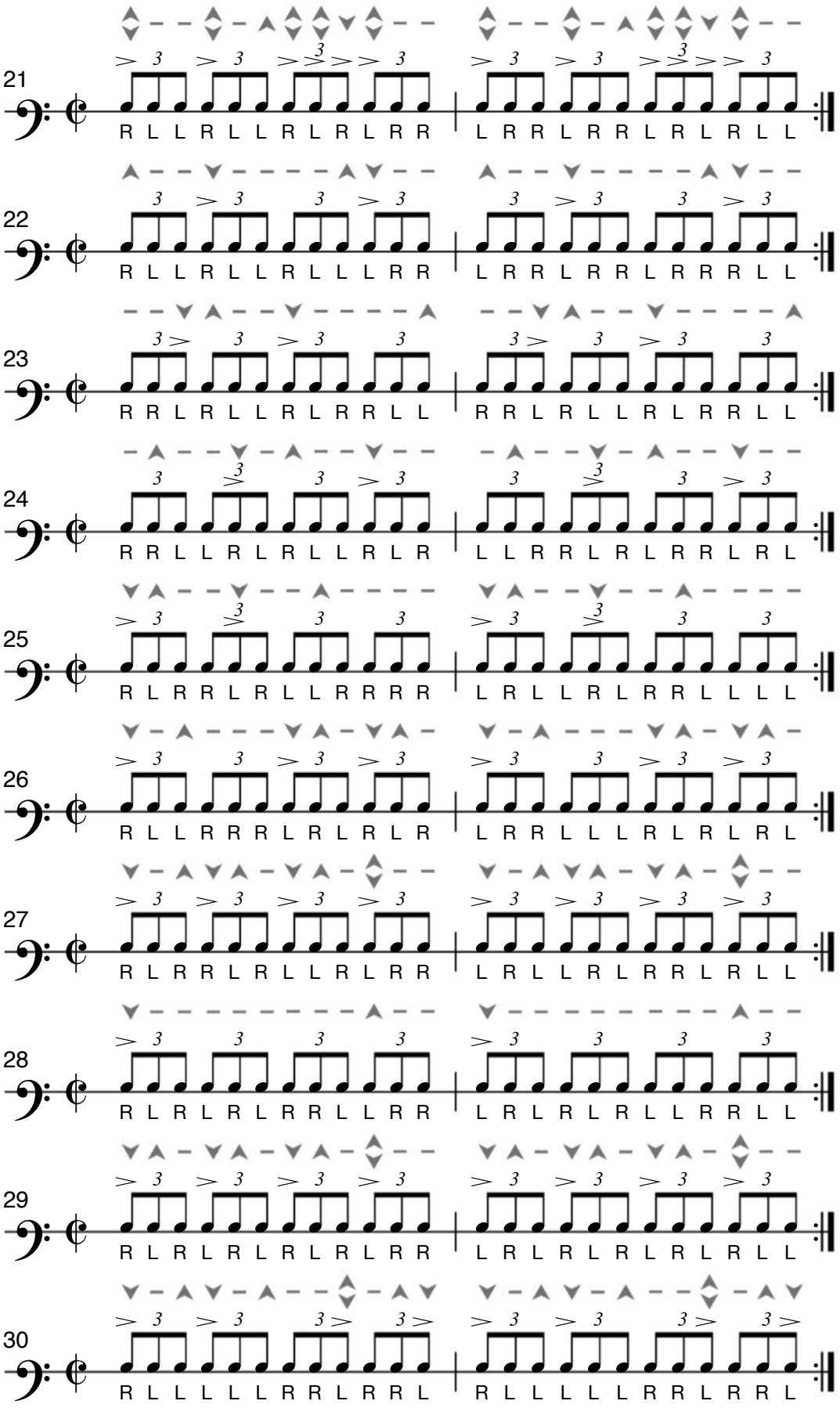
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R R L R L L R L R R L L
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L L R R L R L R R L R L
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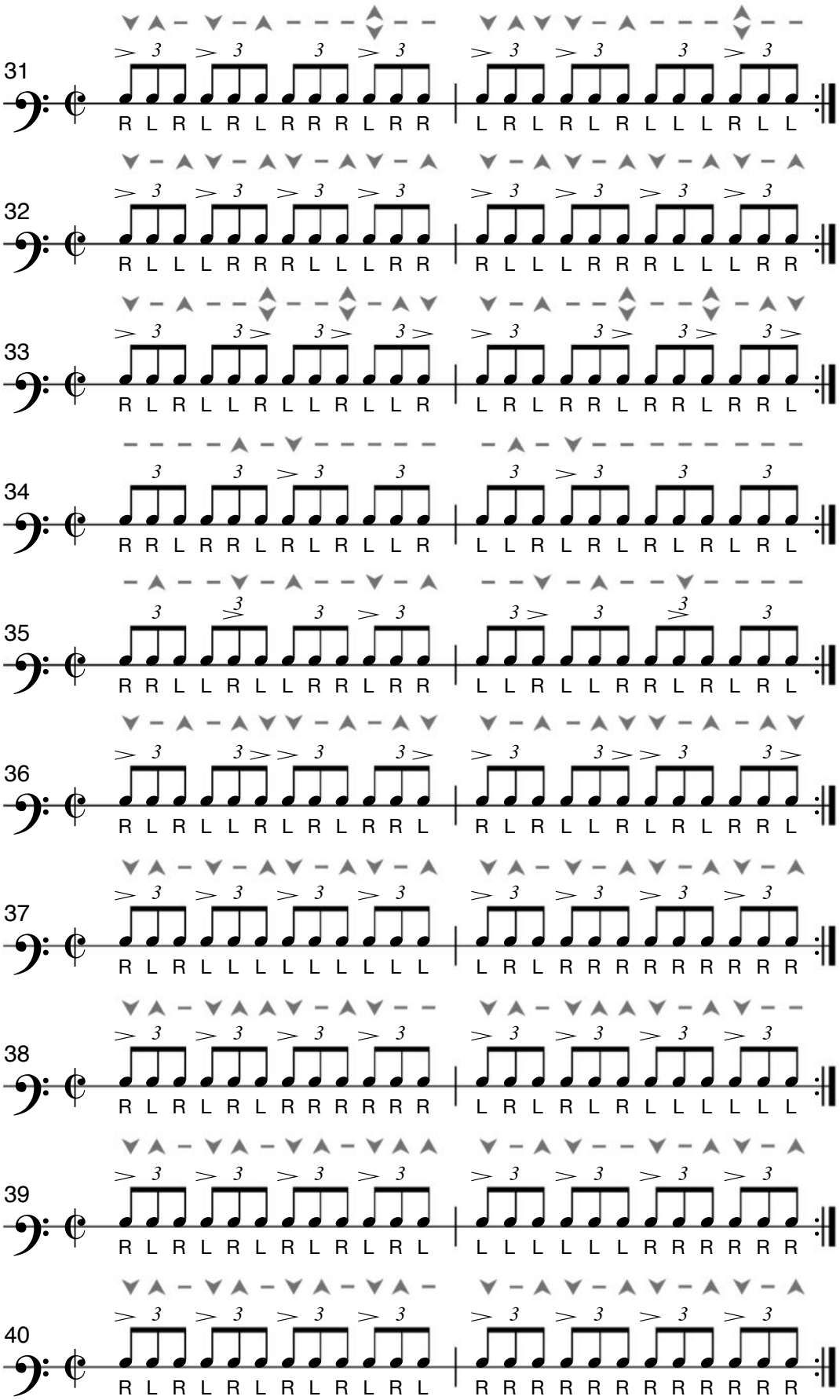
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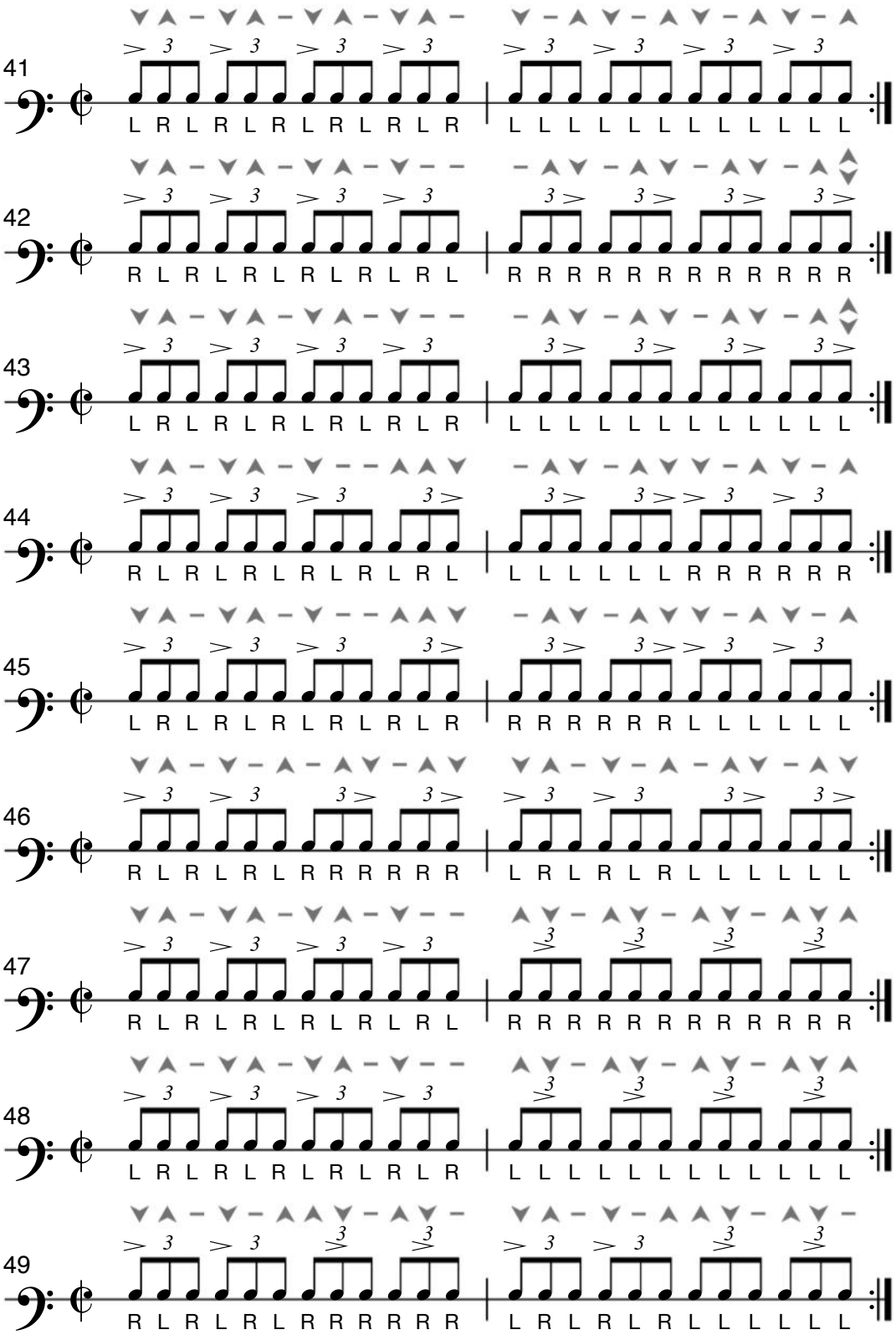

Check out Joe's *Modern Drummer* profile page and get your copy of *Master Studies* at moderndrummer.com

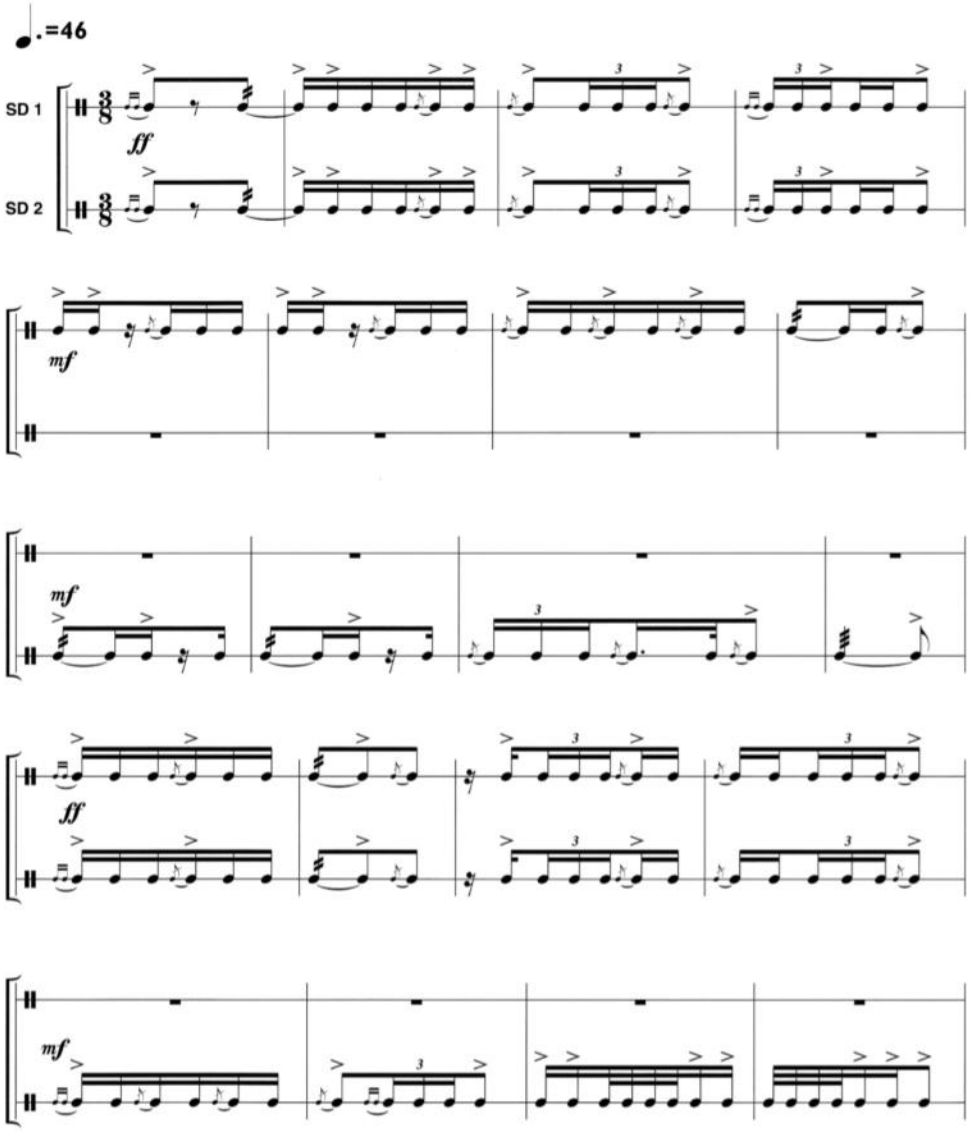
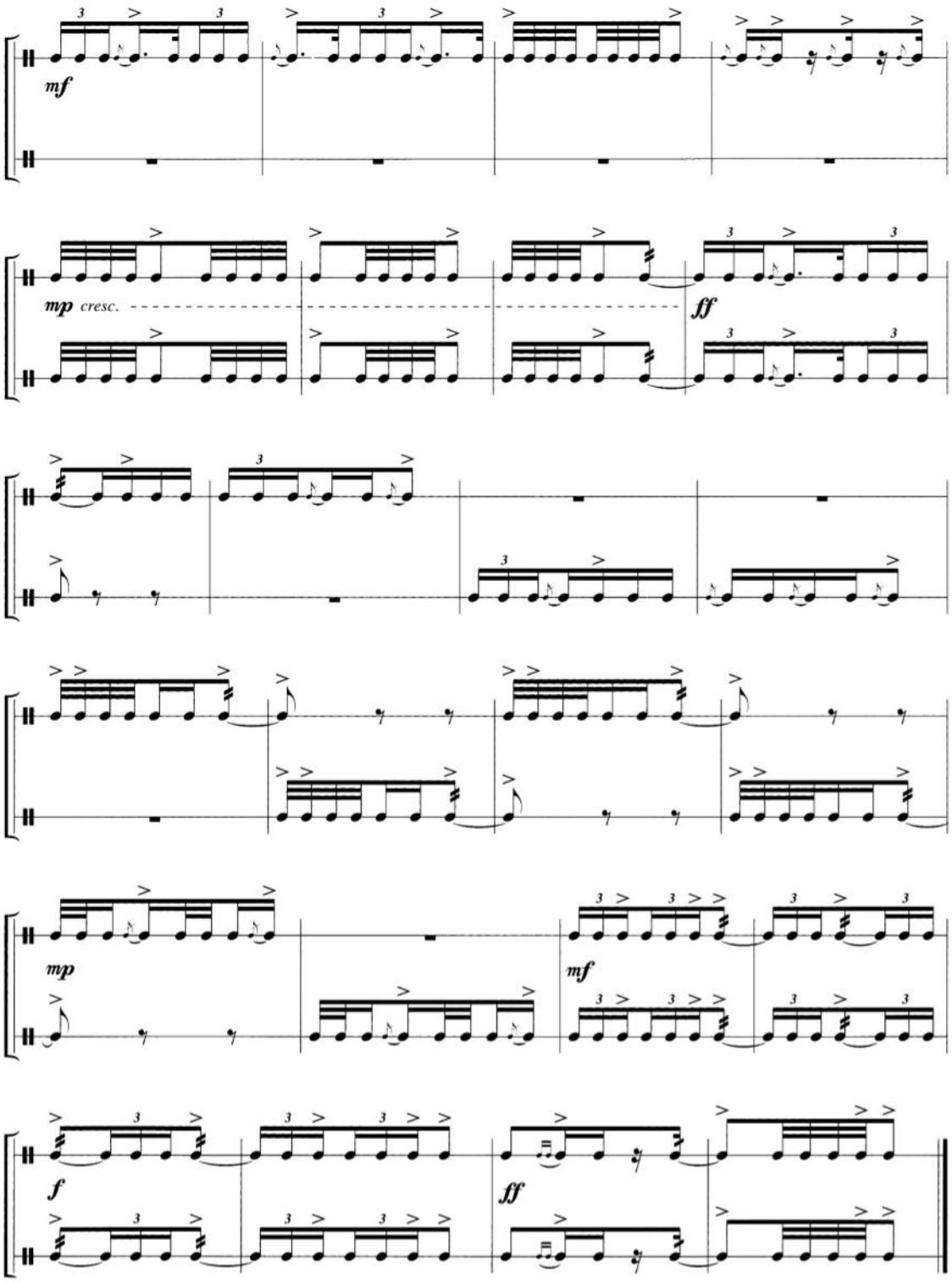
Duet 8

By Ron Spagnardi

Ron Spagnardi wrote a terrific book called *Snare Drum Duets: 25 Duets for Two Snare Drummers.* It offers a selection of 25 challenging duets that range in difficulty from relatively simple to more complex. A wide assortment of time signatures is used throughout the book, from 2/4 and common 4/4 time to 5/8, 7/8, and 12/8, among others. These snare drum duets can be used in several different ways

Two players may use the book as written in duet format, remembering to alternate parts. The metronome marking above each duet indicates the suggested speed at which the material should be performed. However, the tempo can be adjusted up or down in accordance with the ability of the players. Obviously precise execution and perfect timing are essential on the part of both players when performing the material in duet format.

For those working with the book without the benefit of a second player snare drum parts one and two can be practiced as individual solos for improvement of basic reading skills. Conscientious practice of the material in snare drum duets will most definitely improve both reading and technical skills, regardless of the manner in which the book is utilized.

"Duet #8" is written in the uncommon time signature of 3/8. Although that is an uncommon time signature to play, this duet will prepare you for reading more difficult music in any time signature where the eighth note gets the pulse, and in anything that is in 3 (whether something is in 3/8 or 3/4.) If you look at the 3/8 that way, it's not too uncommon, and is very useful to practice.



Check out Ron's *Modern Drummer* profile page and get your copy of *Understanding the Language of Music* at moderndrummer.com

Slingerland Radio King Drums

1938 And 1950 Gene Krupa Super Deluxe Ensembles

By Tim Northup

The drum set is a little over 100 years old, the modern drum set that we are familiar with today is less than 100 years old. After the Civil War, the drum set was created out of necessity. Around 1890 New Orleans drummer Dee Dee Chandler was among the first drummers to combine the bass drum, snare drum, and cymbals so that one person could do the job of three. A lot of innovation happened over the next fifty or so years to bring us to the modern drum set with all the pieces, features, and accessories that we know today.

In the 1880-90's a bass drum pedal was created to play the bass drum, and a snare drum stand was created to hold the snare. With these inventions the drummer could sit and play both drums along with a cymbal attached to the bass drum. In the early 1900's sound effects like Chinese tom toms were added to set. These tom toms came in various sizes and were double sided with tacked heads. They were imported from China by the Leedy, Ludwig and Slingerland drum companies and sold through their catalogs. Until the early 1930's, these were the only toms available. A few years later, these same drum companies began making their own toms with a tacked bottom head and a tunable top head.

1938 GK Super Radio King Deluxe Ensemble

1950 GK Deluxe Radio King Ensemble

In 1935 Gene Krupa worked with Sam Rowland from the Slingerland drum company to produce the first separate tension tom tom. This meant that both the bottom and top heads could be tuned separately. Sam did this by adding tube style snare drum lugs to both the top and bottom of a tom shell for Gene. This set the standard for the modern drum set.

In 1935 Slingerland produced a solid shell snare drum and named it the "Broadcaster." The problem was that Gretsch already had a line of drums named "Broadkaster" (spelled with a K.) Gretsch sued Slingerland over the similar name and won, therefore Slingerland had to discontinue the use of the name. The Broadcaster snare drum never made it into a catalog, instead they changed the name to "Radio King" and

introduced that snare drums in the 1936 catalog. It has been said that the Radio King snare drum is the most recorded snare in the world. Radio King drums, with Gene Krupa endorsing them, became one of the most popular drum kits of the 1940's and 50's. Their popularity was similar to what Ringo Starr created for Ludwig in the 1960's.

While working with Benny Goodman, Gene Krupa became the hottest drummer of the 1930's-40's and was a key figure in making the drum set a solo instrument. He inspired a whole new group of young people that wanted to play the drums like Gene. In 1941, the Gene Krupa, Slingerland National Amateur Swing Drummers' Contest took place at the Wurlitzer Auditorium in NYC. Over 40,000 drummers under the age of 18 entered that contest, with Gene Krupa judging the four semi-finalists. Louie Bellson, age 17, won that contest and Joe Raynor, age 17 took second place.

The first and second prize was a complete Slingerland Radio King drum set and the chance to play with a well-known big band of the day. Northup Drums Museum is fortunate to own Joe Raynor's original second place trophy from that contest, it was probably the same trophy was given to the first-place winner Louie Bellson. We also have all the letters from the Slingerland drum company to Joe Raynor about the contest and prize. For his set, Joe asked Slingerland for a 26" bass drum instead of a 28", and a 12" tom instead of a 13", proving that these custom sized drums were being offered at that time.

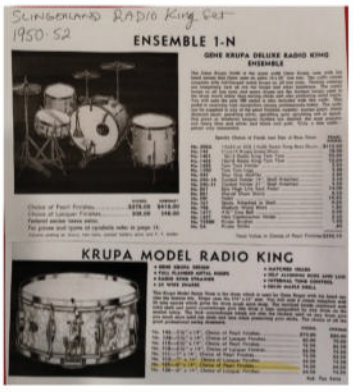
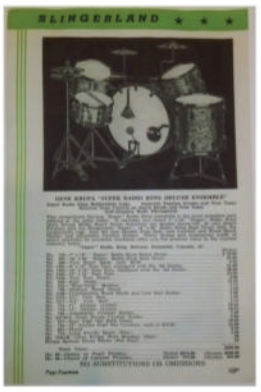
The 1941 GK swing contest trophy, photos of Joe Raynor with his 2nd prize Slingerland Radio Kings, photo of Gene Krupa, Mr. Slingerland, Louie Bellson, Joe Raynor, 3rd and 4th place winners at the Wurlitzer auditorium.

Louie Bellson went on to become one of the best big band drummers in the world, playing with Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Benny Goodman, Tommy Dorsey and many more. Joe Raynor moved to Houston, TX, and played and taught drums professionally. He wrote and published drum methods for his students which helped many of them to go on to become professional drummers.

Let's look at the two vintage Radio King drum sets in this article. The first one is a 1938-40 GK Super Swing Deluxe ensemble with a very unusual and unique addition of a set of Radio King bongos. These were first shown in the 1940 catalog. This white marine pearl set consists of the following: a 26" bass drum, 12" and 14" mounted toms, and a 16" floor tom (held in a cradle.) The 6.5"x14" GK model snare drum rounds out the drums, and a wood block, two cowbells, and Zildjian cymbals round out the accessories. This is a unique kit because of the different sizes than the standard cataloged kits of the day. The drums have original Slingerland Calf-Tone heads on them, that are still in excellent playing condition. This set once belonged to a drummer named Charles Weidner from Chester, PA.

The second set is a cataloged 1950 GK Deluxe Radio King ensemble 1-N in white marine pearl consisting of a 24" bass drum, 13" tom, 16" floor tom, and an optional 8x14" Krupa model Radio King snare drum. All these drums also have original Radio King Calf heads, and the cowbell, wood block combo and Zildjian cymbals complete the set. This is the more typical four-piece set up that we still see today.

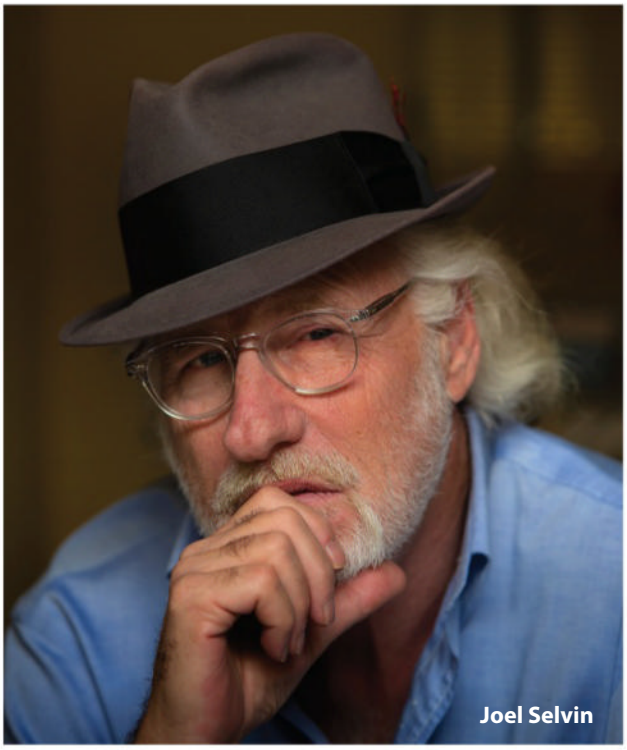
Buddy Rich's last drum set were Radio King's like this set, but with a 5.5x14" snare drum. Buddy's whole set was refurbished and customized by Eames drum company's Joe MacSweeney. Buddy said that those were his favorite sounding drums and that by that time in his career, he could choose what drums he wanted to play instead of endorsing a drum company as in the past.

If you would like to hear how fantastic these Radio King drums sound, watch Steve Smith play "Salt Peanuts" on our 1938 set, **https://fb.watch/rhsWIzto0P/** and visit Northup Drums Museum www.northupdrums.com or call 607-434-4769 to book your appointment today to visit the museum.

Joel Selvin

Drums & Demons, The Tragic Journey of Jim Gordon

By Mark Griffith

Jim Gordon is so much more than the drummer in Eric Clapton's band, Derek and the Dominos. Jim played drums on the soundtrack to many people's lives. He had a remarkable studio drumming career that was unfortunately eclipsed by the commission of a horrific crime when he killed his own mother. He was jailed for the rest of his life, and many people were left to deal with his awful crime. As Gordon spent his last years in jail, writer Joel Selvin took it upon himself to try to tell the difficult and untold story of Jim's music, Jim's schizophrenia, Jim's crime, and the pain that it caused. It was a fine line to walk. But the Gordon family (eventually) cooperated, and Selvin told the entire gut-wrenching story


Joel Selvin

Joel Selvin spent 36 years writing as the pop music critic for the *San Francisco Chronicle*, he grew up in the Bay Area. When the newspaper business went into a decline, he started writing books. The Sammy Hagar book called *Red: My Uncensored Life in Rock* a #1 New York Times bestseller, was the first of his many books. Selvin writes on a wide range of topics, but they are always music related. He wrote on the occurrences at *Altamonte* with the Rolling Stones and the Hell's Angels, he wrote a biography on the songwriter Burt Burns that helped get Burns into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, and he wrote a book about the origins of West Coast pop and Santa Monica's University High class of 1958 called *Hollywood Eden*.

A few years ago, Joel contacted *Modern Drummer* for some assistance with some pictures, we were happy to help. I had heard all the rumors about Jim, and listened to Jim's drumming, but I couldn't wait to read the book and learn more about one of my favorite drummers, Jim Gordon. After I read the book, I couldn't wait to talk to Joel about Jim, and bring Joel, Jim, and this amazing book to the attention of *Modern Drummer's* readers and the wider drum community.

MD: I've listened to Jim Gordon's drumming for my entire life, I've read your book, and I've watched the many podcasts that you have done. But I know there is some stuff that didn't make the book (unfortunately books have to be edited.) So, I have a ton of unanswered questions about Jim.

I know you have been a steady presence in the San Francisco music scene for a long time and are a long-time music writer who has published several great books. I particularly like the Sammy Hagar book, but how did you become aware of Jim Gordon? He's not the most common drum name in the music world?

JS: Thanks. Delaney and Bonnie brought him into my musical world, Delaney and Bonnie were a big deal. I knew of Jim's playing with Joe Cocker because Joe was a big deal. I saw Derek and the Dominos, but I was not too aware of Jim's background as a session player to the detail that I am now. Like everybody else, I read about the crime when it happened, and was stunned, it just shook everybody to their core. Once I started peeling back the layers of that onion and I saw the tremendous amount of pain and torment that Jim went through. I also learned about the incredible effort that Jim put into trying to manage his disease, it's just heartbreaking stuff. But nobody knew any of that, all most people knew was the drummer from Derek and the Dominos killed his own mother. Maybe some informed people knew that Jim was playing on some sessions in LA in the 70s, but then he's in the paper and found guilty of this horrific crime. I'm super proud of this book because it deals with a lot of important issues that are beyond the world of music and drumming.

MD: Today, every story is a big deal for a day or two in the modern media. But when Jim killed his mother, was it a big story in the media?

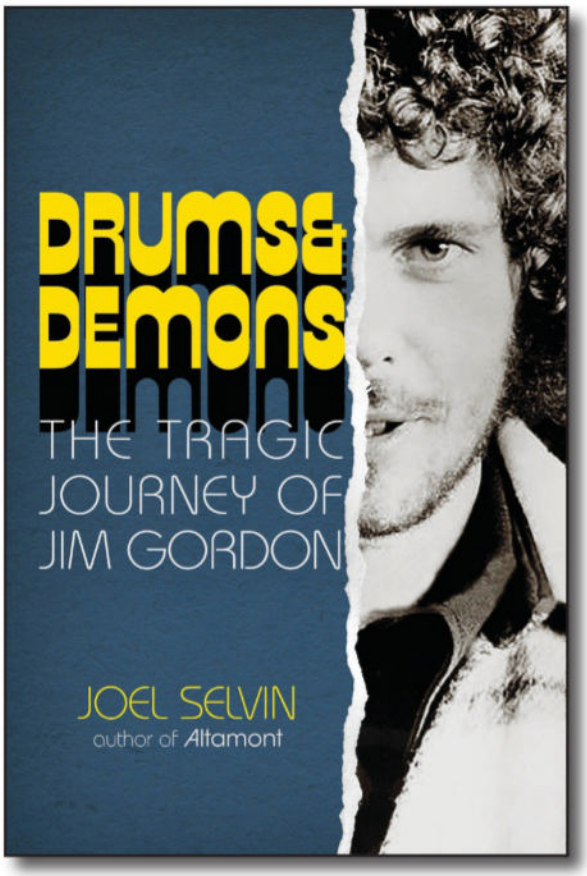
JS: The arrest was reported, the crime was reported, and the trial was only slightly reported on. It was not an "OJ Simpson deal" no. They did not have daily coverage in the Los Angeles papers of the trial, but there was that incredible photograph from the last day of the trial in the LA Times.

MD: What prompted you to write this book?

JS: There was an editor at a New York publishing house with whom I've done many books. He told me that my next book should combine rock'n'roll and crime. From that suggestion, Jim's name came to mind. About 30 years ago I met a couple who had obtained Jim's cooperation on a book, they had done many interviews with Jim and some of ancillary interviews. However, they're they weren't professional journalists. A few years later, they were splitting up and moving. One of them was moving to Montana, and the other was moving to Texas. I tried to acquire their research at the time and one of them was fine with it, but the other person couldn't let go because it was too personal. After it was suggested that I write a book that combined rock'n'roll and crime I circled back to that couple, and I was able to acquire a stack of their interview transcripts. I knew I had a seed that I could grow a book from, and that's when I knew it was green light time.

MD: I had always heard that Jim's family didn't want to talk about Jim and the entire situation, and I can't blame them. But they did open-up to you, contribute to the book, and give their blessings. How did that come about?

JS: When I started out on the book, I reached out to (composer) Mike Post. Mike is godfather to Jim's daughter and is very close with Jim's first wife. Post told me that he didn't see any upside in participating in the book. You must understand that these people were in the "blast zone." The kind of trauma that they experienced is not something you ever recover from. It just changes your life and things never go back. I understood Mike's feelings, but I went ahead with the book. Mike would answer some questions every so often, but I finished the book understanding his feelings. When I finished the book and went on vacation, and the first day I was on vacation, the phone rings and it's Mike Post telling me that Jim had died. The family wanted to send out a release, but they didn't know how, and Mike had suggested that I might be able to help. My publicist handled the Jim Gordon obit and at that point the family came around to the idea of the book. We talked, and they gave me some photographs. I keep in touch with Amy, Mike, and Jill. When they read the book, all of them said that it was revelatory to them. Mike and Jill said almost the exact same thing, they realized they could stop beating themselves up because they realized they couldn't have helped Jim any more than what they did. The book has been cathartic for them and that's real important from my point of view. It's hard getting into people's personal lives that deeply. The entire time that I was writing this book, I was aware that Jim had a grown daughter who would one day read the book. I think for Amy it's been very difficult; she was 14 when it happened, and she was very close to her grandmother (whom Jim killed.) Her father had been unable to bond with her because that was part of his illness, so she just felt abandoned, it was a horrible stage of her life. It took many years before she felt like she would step up and get Jim into a conservatorship. She started to monitor his situation but, in some ways, it was too late. By that time, some ex-con had already gotten out of prison with a power of attorney and emptied Jim's storage unit.



MD: More important than the Camco's (in my opinion,) is where is his ride cymbal?

JS: The ex-con sold the Camco's, but they are out there on the Internet, they've been broken up. I've seen pieces of the kit for sale, I don't know about the ride. It's funny in that great old *Modern Drummer* interview, Jim is very specific and lucid about his drums and cymbals. But that was also about the time that Jim started taking the gold records off the wall and putting them in the trash.

MD: How did your research progress, what did your writing process involve?

JS: Once I found those interviews, the next thing I did was really start listening to the records that Jim played on. In that, Jim revealed himself as a true artist very quickly. That was the next step, that's where everything really lit up for me. Once I got inside of Jim's musical world, it became a luminous and special place. As you know, nobody played drums like Jim Gordon, unless they tried to. Jim Keltner told me, "I had to learn to play like Jim Gordon, in order to NOT play like Jim Gordon." Once I started talking to people, I found out that nobody really knew Jim Gordon. But that was a function of him being schizophrenic. Schizophrenics don't have the same ability to bond with other people, so Jim didn't have friends in the way that you and I have friends. When I was interviewing guitarist Dean Parks, who had done between 100 and 150 sessions with Jim, I asked Dean if he had ever had a drink with Jim after work? No. I asked if Dean knew that Jim Gordon was married and had a kid? No.

MD: You learned from talking to doctors that schizophrenia is a much more prevalent illness today than we all know about.

JS: My biggest surprise in working on the book was that schizophrenia occurs in 1 in 100 people in the general population today. That's just amazing. But there is a whole sliding scale to schizophrenia, people at the bottom of that scale don't exhibit a lot of the symptoms and can manage it. But as it moves up the scale there's medical facilities and pharmaceutical answers, but many of the schizophrenics at the top of the scale don't respond to treatment at all. From talking to medical professionals and describing Jim's symptoms, it sounds like Jim had an extreme case. But he was very skillful at disguising his disease, that was close as he could come to "managing"

it. But occasionally there would be these eruptions that were as mysterious to him as they were to other people. However, it is ironic that the 70's rock scene could be so hospitable and accommodating to addicts, deviants, and domestic violence. But for somebody who was mentally ill, people just averted their eyes, they didn't know what to do. And unfortunately, that is still a microcosm of how our society deals with mental illness. There is still minimal aftercare, follow-up, coping mechanisms, empathy, and no compassion mechanism in place.

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MD: Let us turn to the music. I know you have a nice Jim Gordon playlist on Spotify, but what was some of the first music that you investigated with Jim drumming?

JS: There was (of course) the obvious stuff: Delaney and Bonnie, Cocker, and Clapton; but when I heard B.W. Stephenson's "My Maria" from 1973 (recently covered by Brooks & Dunn,) I realized what we were dealing with. That is just a completely luminous drum part that is deeply embedded in the composition, and the drums are clearly the trigger for that song becoming a #1 record. If you put a less melodic drummer in there, somebody who is just hitting the cross-sticks on the backbeats, that wouldn't have been a hit record. That's true for a lot of Jim's recordings. "Grazing in the Grass" by the Friends of Distinction is another example, that's just explosive drumming. Thankfully, some drummers know about this music, but more drummers know about Jim because if you play the instrument, you can appreciate the extraordinary level of musical intuition that Jim Gordon possessed. Jim's ability to precisely divide and reallocate time is just unparalleled, it goes beyond notation, you couldn't write that stuff out; Although Zappa tried, and Jim read it like it was a children's book.

MD: What were you able to find out about the recording of "My Maria"?

JS: There is a unique Jim Gordon tool on that record. He had a can of rice that he welded shut, it's sounds like a short rain stick. That sound smears the beat, it sounds a little bit like a slightly open hi-hat or something, but it's not, it's this can of rice. All the drive of the record is on the two and the three, not the one. Jim creates this little this push in the middle of the of the measure that just lifts the vocals. And at the end when he goes to the ride cymbal, it sounds and feels like a fire engine returning to the station.

MD: What other tunes did you find that were exciting?

JS: One of my favorites, and you can only find it on YouTube now, is a Hugo Montenegro session. Hugo had a teenage son who played synthesizer, and Hugo decided to do an album of Elton John songs with his son. Hugo hired Jim, James Jamerson, Larry Carlton, and a few other first-call musicians. There's an original song called "Blast Off" on that record that is super show off drumming. About halfway through Jim just stops keeping time and plays all fills. It's amazing, because you didn't hear Jim play like that much.

Jim did a solo album with Bob Thiele called *Jimmy Gordon's Jazz and Pops* and there's some spectacular drumming on that. There's a Gary Coleman recording on Flying Dutchman called *Spontaneous Combustion,* that's all of the wrecking crew guys and Jim. That's very "show-offy" drumming too. But the thing that made Jim special was that he understood the drums as a wholly musical instrument that had purpose far beyond just back beats and time keeping. Jim Gordon found a way to push the drums into the fabric of compositions, that is how he lit up certain tracks in his very special way. The most obvious example is a song that he's not even playing drums on, it's Hal Blaine on the kit. The tune is the Beach Boys "God Only Knows." Jim is playing four orange juice bottles that he cut to create the right pitches. You hear this melodic clip-clop that fits into the mix brilliantly and percolates the song. In the studio Jim was a genius that that didn't have to be told what to play, he didn't need charts, he just knew what to do for the song.

It all goes back to like how much studio work he did; three sessions a day, three to five songs per session, six days a week for years. And at every one of those sessions the goal was to create a hit record. They weren't playing jazz; they were studying the science of making hit records. They were doing surgery on commercial music, and they got very good at creating hit records.

By the time Jim showed up in England in 1970 and started playing with Clapton, George Harrison, John Lennon, and Traffic; Those guys had never seen anybody play drums like that. The whole situation with the George Harrison *All Things Must Pass* sessions was that Ringo was on the sessions, that's Ringo on "My Sweet Lord." Then Ringo had to leave town and Harrison brought in Derek and the Dominos. The first track they did was "What Is Life?" When I hear Jim charge into that track, I feel his excitement, command, and confidence. Ringo came back a week or so later, and they gave him a tambourine.

MD: What was Jim's musical background? Did he study drums or music? It takes an arranger's or a composer's ear to find your way into a track like that, where did that come from?

JS: Jim came to the drums early in life, at around age 8, and it just clicked for him. Even his indifferent parents could recognize that he found his key to life. By the time he was in high school he was a full-on student of music and playing in an after-school percussion program. The music teacher at Grant High was a

But the thing that made Jim special was that he understood the drums as a wholly musical instrument that had purpose far beyond just back beats and time keeping. Jim Gordon found a way to push the drums into the fabric of compositions.

percussionist himself, so Jim took private lessons from him, he also took private lessons from (Cubby O'Brien's dad) Hack O'Brien who was the big drum teacher in the San Fernando Valley. He took lessons from very stern guy percussion professor at UCLA named Earl Hatch who had Jim working on his four-mallet technique. In high school Jim was a member of the Grant High marching band, he was also playing with the Burbank Symphony, and he was in a band that played Hollywood nightclubs three nights a week. The day after he graduated from high school, he went on the road with The Everly Brothers that's where his career starts, it's pretty remarkable.

MD: What were some other landmark recordings that you discovered while working on the book?

JS: There's really three periods of Jim's career. One is the initial Hollywood session stuff which is just filled with fantastic things like "Classical Gas" and "Wichita Lineman" where Jim makes a stealth switch from brushes to sticks to in the final chorus. Jim Gordon was Merle Haggard's favorite drummer. He's on "Mama Tried" "Lonesome Fugitive" and lots more. That stuff is fantastically subtle. Gary Puckett records are probably not recordings that young drummers give much thought to. But they were 28-piece bands with *two* bass players, *three* keyboards, and only *one* drummer. You know the hits, but the album tracks are just awesome. Jim was a workaholic kind of guy, he had one day off on the Derek and the Dominos sessions, and he did a Gary Puckett session on that day off. The stuff that Jim did in England was so suited to Jim's rock aesthetic of that era. But then the Hollywood stuff like Johnny Rivers and Maria Muldaur's "Midnight at the Oasis" sounded different. Jim made that tune a hit, everyone else on the session were folk musicians. (Producer) Lenny Waronker just let Jim do his thing, and he played that samba groove. The masterpiece is obviously Carly Simon's "You're So Vain" but on the other hand, who else could have played the drum part on Harry Nilsson's "Coconut"? Then there the Zappa stuff which is some of Frank's densest and most complicated music.

MD: I adore the Zappa stuff like *Imaginary Diseases*, the *Zappa Wazoo* recording (from Boston,) and the *Petit Wazoo* bootlegs. But on the other side of things, I also love the Johnny Rivers stuff, was that Johnny Rivers band a working band around town?

JS: They all knew each other. Bassist Joe Osborne, a young Michael Omartian, Dean Parks, and Larry Carlton were all session musicians at the time, and that was a pricey band, but they did go to Europe with Johnny Rivers for a month (without Larry Carlton.) The tracks on the *LA Reggae* sessions are just ferocious, and they got Johnny back on the charts with "The Rockin' Pneumonia and the Boogie Woogie Flu."

I don't know that Jim did a lot of bandstand touring gigs outside of Delaney and Bonnie, Joe Cocker, Derrick and The Dominos, and Traffic. I didn't find a lot of band touring gigs. That is why it was so surprising for him to go out with Burton Cummings at the time, but again that was a personal decision based on his deteriorating condition.

MD: When did Jim first discover his own illness?

JS: It's hard to say. There are various reports from Jim that seem to say that he lived with voices in his head for much of his life. The shocking thing is that he says initially that he found the voices to be comforting and friendly. When I tell that to psychiatrists they flip out. Most of them are not aware of voices being un-malevolent. There are people that report of Jim behaving strangely in high school, but he seemed to develop the abilities to mask the symptoms and maintain a (kind of) genial and compliant collaborative face to the world, so he could operate and function in the very high level and competitive profession of being a session musician.

MD: I know you're not a doctor, but are there many examples of a high functioning schizophrenics?

JS: There is that movie *A Beautiful Mind,* which is sort of the warm and fuzzy version of this. Brian Wilson, Peter Green, and Skip Spence from Moby Grape might also be examples as well.

MD: Did Jim and Brian Wilson ever find each other to be kindred spirits in their conditions?

JS: I don't know if they talked about their illnesses, but they were kindred spirits musically. On *Pet Sounds*, Jim's all over various tracks, although Hal Blaine is mostly on drums. But when they start "Good Vibrations" Hal and Jim are switching off at the kit, the master tape to "Good Vibrations" is half Jim and half Hal. That's also very obviously Jim on "Heroes and Villains" too.

MD: I think there is a misconception out there that Jim's issues were caused by drug use and abuse. Can you address that?

JS: Thanks for asking that. This was NOT the product of drugs and alcohol; it was a product of mental illness. Probably Jim's most effective coping mechanism was alcohol and cocaine. Alcohol dulled the voices and could actually help defeat the commands of the hallucinations. I asked a psychiatrist about the cocaine use

because it doesn't seem to me that if your head filled with voices that cocaine could help. But cocaine regulates the dopamine levels in the brain. Although those are destructive drugs, they were very effective for Jim at the same time. They prescribed him the very powerful anti-psychotic and psychiatric medicine, and the sledgehammer drugs (of the time) too, he gobbled them down, but they didn't help.

Another problem that Jim faced was that in the mid 70s the recovery community knew very little about what we now call "dual diagnosis." Dual diagnosis is when you are organically mentally ill, and you have substance abuse problems. Those things come together in a way that's very complicated and exacerbates both problems. Jim's mother had been a member of AA for a long time and was a medical professional. But she never thought Jim had anything but problems with drugs and alcohol. It never occurred to her that he was mentally ill. She took him to AA meetings and Jim went through a whole period where he was sober, but it didn't help. The recovery and the psychiatric community were appalled at the drug use and didn't understand the role it played. Therefore, Jim spent his life floating at sea without anybody to reel him in.

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MD: This is an awkward question, but from your research do you think his illness had any "positive" effect on his drumming?

JS: There are two things that I'm absolutely convinced of… One, is that Jim's almost supernatural musical abilities come from the same biochemical system that his disease comes from. Two, when Jim played the drums, the disease vanished. That came from a combination of the hypnotic effect of rhythmic entrainment (the mighty groove,) and the feeling of striking the drum set, which you feel in every cell in your body. Between those two things the illness just passed from his consciousness when he was playing drums. When he played drums, he was in a place where he was safe, secure, in charge, and in command of his world. As long as he was "there," everything was usually fine. That feeling is seen in a rare picture in the book of Jim playing with Page Cavanaugh and Jim is smiling from ear to ear. That aren't many pictures of Jim smiling. But when he stopped playing drums, it all collapsed. Those two observations are very crucial.

Since we're talking in *Modern Drummer* magazine, I think we're both aware of the cosmic and ancient nature of the drums. I say in in the book, "To strike a drum is to shake hands with the ancestors."

> I say in in the book, "To strike a drum is to shake hands with the ancestors."

MD: I agree, the drums are a magical force. I have done some drumming work with people with special needs, and the act of playing drums does have a healing force. The magic of drumming and the magic of music is a real thing.

JS: I talked to a mental health professional, and he told me that nothing calms down a schizophrenic like an iPod and some headphones. I think music and drumming is a *dopamine shower.*

MD: What drummers and other musicians did you speak to about Jim?

JS: When I started working on the book, I quickly stumbled onto the best Jim Gordon discography on the internet. It's run by a drummer named Adam Minkoff. Adam is a first call New York drummer, if he isn't playing with the Philip Glass, he's with Larkin Poe. Adam made a study of Jim and was incredibly helpful, not just with his discography, but he came up with a 1000 union contracts which I suspect is between 1/4 and 1/3 of Jim's session career. Those contracts do map out a lot of his career, and there were some fantastic sessions in there that I had no idea ever happened. Adam is typical of the drummers of today (like yourself) who have made a study of what's come before them. Adam was an open door to the study of Jim Gordon.

The other drummers, Jim's "peers," they all knew him, whether it was Jim Keltner or Dave Kemper. All the bass players wanted to play with Jim too. Bob Glaub and Lee Sklar talked about playing unique and wonderful music with Jim. They all remembered that Jim didn't make mistakes. When musicians came into a session, and saw Jim was at the drums, they knew it was going to be fine. Van Dyke Parks called Jim the "Esprit De Corps." However, Bob Glaub was on a session when Jim had an episode, he remembered Jim standing up and throwing the drumsticks on the floor, Jim screamed towards Bob saying, "Did you say I was stupid? What did you say to me?" Eventually Jim calmed down and cut the track. A week or so later, Jackson Browne and Bob were trying to figure out who was gonna play drums on the next tour, because Russ Kunkel was off with James Taylor. Bob said to Jackson, "I just did a session with Jim Gordon, he's a *little nuts,* but there's nobody's better!" So, Jackson took Jim on tour. Unfortunately, that was Jimmy's last moment on the good foot. When I talked to Jackson, I asked him if he knew that Jim was living in residential psychiatric treatment at the time he was in the band? Jackson said, "You know, I knew there was some rehab in his background, but I really thought it was just drugs and alcohol and it wasn't any of my business."

MD: When the session greats speak, they all refer to the feeling that when they saw (fill in the blank) they knew everything was going to run *fine*. Was it the same with Jim?

JS: Jim was very confident in the studio, it was a place where he was in charge, comfortable, compliant, and confident. I'm told that he could be a little ornery about takes that he didn't think were necessary. Dean Parks said that when Jim was doing the Steely Dan session for *Pretzel Logic*, they were tedious. He said that Jim had a hard time knowing what they wanted. Jeff Porcaro brought Jim into Steely Dan, Jeff and Jim both went to Grant High. I think Jim's shadow was pretty long at that school in those days. I think Jeff Porcaro's career was kind of a tribute to Jim Gordon. A few people told me that when someone told Jeff that he sounded good, he would (humbly) reply, "You should hear Jim Gordon!"

MD: What did you find about that amazing Hall and Oates

session that produced the hit "Sara Smile."

JS: Jim did a bunch of Hall and Oates sessions, although Ed Green did a bunch of them too. Compare "Camellia" and "Rich Girl," and you can tell the difference. But there was one session where Jim started a very intense argument with himself, and nobody knew who he was arguing with. It was scary enough that everybody left the studio and went into the control room and just turned the mics down in the drum booth so they couldn't hear Jim yelling. Every so often, they would turn the mic's up and he'd still yelling so they turned them back down and waited. Finally, Jim cooled out and cut the track. There were a lot of these little episodes that nobody really understood because they didn't have any sense that Jim was mentally ill. He was functioning and was the greatest drummer they had ever heard. He was admitted to 15 different residential psychiatric programs over five years. That means that every couple of months he was checking into a new mental hospital. In the meantime, he was seeing several therapists at a time, and none of them diagnosed him as schizophrenic until after the crime. He was just too high functioning.

MD: We have all heard the amazing grooves and the creative recordings, the drumming is all right there for us to learn from. But what can society learn from the tragic life of Jim Gordon?

JS: When you read the book, you'll see how little compassion Jim received. Nobody's stopped for a minute to wonder what was behind the outbursts and the horrific crime when he killed his own mother. It was just altogether too horrifying. There's a quote in the book from Frank Zappa where Frank says that he, "Doesn't condone murder, but if it had to do with the chemicals in Jim's brain, then it's something that could happen to anyone." That's important to understand. Mental illness can strike anybody. You can see it in people that are sleeping in the streets, and it could happen to the greatest drummer in the Hollywood studio system. That was one of the reasons why it was so important to me to detail Jimmy's fantastic artistic life. I want the readers to understand that Jim Gordon fell from a mighty place in his life, he couldn't have attained a higher stature in drumming. And he came all the way down. It's not warm and fuzzy, it is real life, it's the unhappy ending that I'm afraid most people who are mentally ill suffer.

MD: I sincerely hope that your book can help us musicians (and more importantly society in general,) see mental illness for what it is.

JS: The second half of this book is so fraught with pain and turmoil; it was very difficult for me to write. Sometimes I had to just push myself away from the laptop. It's an incredible slog through an intense hellscape. Our society has trended away from compassion in the recent past, and we need to change that. We need to have empathy for our brothers and sisters, especially for those that can't handle life in the same way that we can. Schizophrenics like Jim live in a different reality than we do. We don't share the same landmarks of what we think of as real life.

MD: My other hope for this book is that music lovers will realize that they have been listening to Jim's drumming their entire life, they just didn't know it. And hopefully Jim's story and voice will become a voice for empathy for the mentally ill.

JS: Fortunately, the psychiatric world is sprinkled with music fans, they know about Jim. The response from the mental health world is that they're all quite aware of the things that sort of blow our mind. They know how common schizophrenia is, and they know how poorly the treatment works. Jim's case is not a surprise to them. However, the culmination is very unusual. It's common for schizophrenics to hurt themselves, but not other people. Today the doctors recognize what Jim's situation was, they see it on different scales in their practices all the time. The comment that I've gotten is that I've been scientifically accurate in showing a vivid and dramatic display of the actual effects of this kind of mental illness.

I called a doctor that works at Napa State hospital for some assistance with the book. We first started talking and he immediately said, "Are you writing the Jim Gordon story?" The accounts of schizophrenics are kind of few and far between, it's just part of the whole syndrome, it's swept under the rug. It is a dreadful real-life nightmare and I felt like it was really important to detail that. At the same time, I felt the importance of detailing the amazing artistic accomplishments of Jim Gordon's drumming career, and the deep influence he had on music.

I felt the importance of detailing the amazing artistic accomplishments of Jim Gordon's drumming career, and the deep influence he had on music.

MD: Let's end on a happy note. I didn't know that Jim played drums on Mike Post's original theme for the TV show *The Rockford Files*, and when I went back to listen to it, I was floored. Anyone reading this must go to YouTube and check out the 3:44 second version of the *Rockford Files* theme. How much TV work did Jim do?

JS: That was toward the end of Jim's relationship with Mike Post. But Mike Post did a lot of TV work, and although Mike also used Earl Palmer and Hal Blaine, Jim did a lot of work with Mike. As the 70s ended, a lot of the record sessions were also coming to a close. Jim did a lot of industrials, TV, and jingles. There is a Mike Post record called *Fused* with arranger Pete Carpenter that is a fantastic Jim Gordon recording. There's so much great Jim Gordon music to talk about… The disco beats on "Apache," "Rock the Boat," Neil Young's tune "Expecting to Fly," The Byrds "Going Back," The Everly Brothers record The *Sound of the Everly Brothers*, Groove Holmes' *Six Million Dollar Man*, Donovan's *Essence to Essence*… there is just so many. You can always tell when Jim's on a track.

MD: I'll also draw your attention to a record that Keltner and Jim Gordon did together by Thelma Houston and Pressure Cooker called *I've Got the Music in Me*. It's amazing! And we haven't even mentioned Derek and the Dominos "Layla."

JS: Well, that's just a given! The exciting drumming on that track just jumps out and grabs you.

Check out Joel's profile page, at moderndrummer.com

OUT NOW!

This month's *Modern Drummer* Out Now is special. We are spotlighting some outstanding new and reissue LPs in honor of April's **National Record Store Day 2024.** All of you drumming "vinyl heads" pay attention! We are featuring new, reissued, and audiophile edition LP's that have the drums at the center of their sound. Some of these recordings are special audiophile pressings, some are drummer-led, and some just include high-quality, special, or unique drumming and musical performances from the drummer and/or musicians in the band. We encourage our readers to listen to the recordings that inspire them and keep looking for new musical avenues to explore. You'll never know what new music you might find inspiring! Listen and learn.

Sam First is a jazz club in Los Angeles, and they are also running their own record label releasing live sets recorded at the club. ***Sam First Records*** *come on quality pressed and heavy high-quality vinyl, with very informative liner notes, and unique photographic artwork. Many of their LP's come with free downloads that include many extra tracks. The following is a good selection of the Sam First LPs that have been released so far.*

Joe LaBarbera Quintet

World Travelers
Joe LaBarbera drums
Sam First Records.

Why isn't Joe LaBarbera included when mentioning the great jazz drummers? Long stints with Woody Herman's big band, Bill Evans trio, and with the legendary Tony Bennett should guarantee his immediate stature. That stature is cemented by an amazing touch on the drums, a boundless sense of creativity, a great sound, and the ability to always play just the right thing. Joe LaBarbera never overplays, and he doesn't underplay. But it is his longtime quintet that we hear here. His quintet has been together for over thirty years, and it is an ensemble of highly esteemed sidemen including saxophonist Bob Sheppard and pianist Bill Cunliffe.

The band comes out of the gate swinging. Pay close attention to Joe's into on "Lake Erie," it consists of everything that makes jazz drumming special. He makes the drums speak. The way that LaBarbera navigates the tricky Joe Lovano composition "Landmark's Along the Way" is mastery. While there are five tunes on this record the LP comes with a download code to access four more outstanding tracks from the quintet. Unfortunately, *World Travelers* is only this band's fifth recording, but we can all hope for many more.

Rachel Eckroth

Humanoid
Tina Raymond drums
Sam First Records

Rachel Eckroth is a groundbreaking and uber-creative keyboardist-pianist, although on *Humanoid* she plays only piano. But the instrument doesn't really matter, Eckroth's music is exciting and knows no boundaries, and Tina Raymond is Eckroth's perfect drummer! I first heard Tina a few months ago on her recording *Divinations*, and I couldn't wait to hear more. That recording (like this one) also featured guitarist Andrew Renfroe. With the addition of bassist Billy Mohler, this is a powerhouse of a quartet. Listen to Mohler's amazing intro, and Raymond's exciting drum solo that begin side two of the LP. On Duke Ellington's "Fleurette Africaine" Tina and Billy create attender rolling groove that allows Eckroth and Renfroe to explore with no safety net. The musical twists and turns go everywhere and back. They are not songs, as much as they are journeys or little "trips" to a new land (and back.) This is a great band, and an even greater record!

Jeff Babko, Tim Lefebvre, Mark Guiliana

Clam City
Mark Guiliana drums
Sam First Records

Here's a piano trio for the ages. Imagine a cross between Thelonious Monk, Kraftwerk, Billy Preston, Devo, Keith Jarrett, and Bob Dylan… *or maybe don't.* I love music with a sense of humor, and this music as many smiles (and laughs) in it, as it does notes. In his liner notes, Jeff Babko thanks Sam First for "catching and releasing" this music, and I cannot agree more. "Church of Bill Hilton" takes us to church, and "New Wave Theater" wheels an old black and white TV into the church. "New Jersey Ballad" places that church into rural New Jersey, and "Fugue Robotique" puts that whole scene next door to an 80s arcade playing German synth-pop.

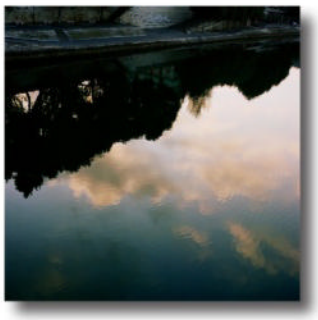
"New Wave Theater" slowly builds to a roar featuring Guiliana's signature slash and burn chatter. While "Fugue Robotique" creates a distinguishable mood that only this trio could create, and Guiliana dances around that mood playfully. Mark Guiliana also brings the peaceful composition "New Jersey Ballad" to cleanse the musical palette. Babko, Lefebvre, and Guiliana are equal inhabitants in *Clam City*, and they all bring their "A" games.

Justin Kauflin Trio

Live at Sam First
Mark Ferber drums
Sam First Records

The phenomenal pianist Justin Kauflin comes to us with praise from everyone who hears him, including (none other than)

Quincy Jones. His well-grounded piano approach seems to come from a combination of McCoy Tyner and Bill Evans. His touch on the opener harkens to Tyner, as drummer Mark Ferber's patient drumming let's everything evolve very naturally. Ferber's crescendo at the end adds a superb exclamation point to the song. "Tempest" is the standout track on the record, the trio really connects and explores the nooks and crannies of the tune with Ferber gently taking the reins and steering the trio into and out of an interesting "tempest" of shade, dynamics, and excitement. All along bassist David Robaire holds everything down with aplomb.



Omar Sosa

Omar Sosa's 88 Well-Tuned Drums
Marque Gilmore, Ernesto Simpson, Elliot Kavee, drums.
Adam Rudolph, Roman Diaz, Maricio Doctor, Pedro Martinez, percussion
TA Records

Pianist Omar Sosa views his piano as 88 well-tuned drums, and on this soundtrack to the film (of the same name) he explains this unique musical concept. This recording features some often overlooked drummers that deserve wider listening. Marque Gilmore (not Marcus Gilmore) was an early, important (and under-recorded) voice in the beginnings of drum and bass styled music. Elliot Kavee is a stalwart in the avant-garde scene, and Ernesto Simpson is a Latin-music master. Percussionists Adam Rudolph, Roman Diaz, Maricio Doctor, and Pedro Martinez bring wonderful and unique percussion voices to the music. This soundtrack is a sampler of Sosa's interesting career and is beautiful music. The red vinyl is pretty cool too!

*Last year **Craft Recordings** started releasing several of **Contemporary Records** best jazz recordings as a part of their **Acoustic Sounds Series** of LP's. The following are an interesting bunch of records that doesn't always lean on the most popular and noted jazz recordings. All of the pressings sound warm, fat, and very acoustic. And all the music is classic and swinging!*

Art Farmer

Portrait of Art Farmer
Roy Haynes drums
Contemporary-Craft Records

Roy Haynes is THE living drumming legend. Did you know he just turned 99 years old? Every drummer has a favorite Roy Haynes record, Sarah Vaughan *After Hours,* Thelonious Monk *Thelonious in Action,* Chick Corea *Now He Sings, Now He Sobs,* Pat Metheny *Question and Answer,* or maybe Roy's *own Out of the Afternoon*. But here is one that not many drummer's mention; *Portrait of Art Farmer*, done in 1958 after he left Sarah Vaughan and before he joined Thelonious Monk. Roy always made the musicians around him sound better,
that's our job as drummers.
And along with the equally empathetic pianist Hank Jones,

Art Farmer couldn't have sounded better, and neither could this LP. Roy's slippery sense of time, his unique vocabulary, his touch, his snap, his crackle, his sound and his swing are all present. Listen to "Back in the Cage," "Earth," and "And Now…" It's all there.

Andre Previn and his Pals Shelly Manne & Red Mitchell

West Side Story
Shelly Manne drums
Contemporary-Craft Records

Last month Peter Erskine wrote about the genius that was Shelly Manne in his Jazz Insights column. All that was said there, could be echoed here. However, on *West Side Story*, an outstandingly well-recorded date, we can really study the bass and drumming relationship of Shelly Manne and bassist Red Mitchell. While (in my opinion) some of Shelly's best playing was with Ray Brown on the Poll Winners recordings, his playing with Red Mitchell is equally as good. When Brown and Manne supported Previn, you could really hear (and feel) their perfectly musical support to the young pianist-composer-arranger. Listen to Shelly's super creative brush playing on "I Feel Pretty." It's not just his creativity with the brush solos, it's the sound of his brushes, and the sound (and feel) of his timekeeping with the brushes. It's just amazing, and (I must admit) that everything sounds perfect on this specific LP.

Ornette Coleman

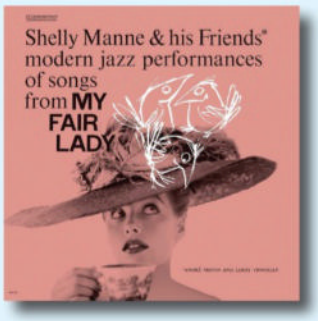
Something Else! The Music of Ornette Coleman
Billy Higgins drums
Contemporary-Craft Recordings

I must admit to not being a died in the wool audiophile. But when I popped on this LP, I was really struck by the sound. So much that I also pulled out my original LP and CD, and wow (!!!) what a difference. This LP might have converted me into one of those *audiophile guys.* I had listened to the music on *Something Else*! for years, but it never sounded this good. And so much of that

amazing sound was reflected in Billy Higgins' drums, especially his snare and ride cymbal. Of course, it doesn't hurt that it is the legendary Billy Higgins playing, but his drumming and drum sound just jumps out on this record. The trumpet of Don Cherry sounds so much warmer, and even Ornette's plastic saxophone sounds warmer. The music on this record is not the music that people usually associate with Ornette, it is much more accessible and "inside." That has always made it one of my favorites, and now with this great sounding LP, it has become even more of a personal favorite. This is the best sounding record of all the Craft reissues.

Shelly Manne & his Friends Andre Previn and Leroy Vinnegar

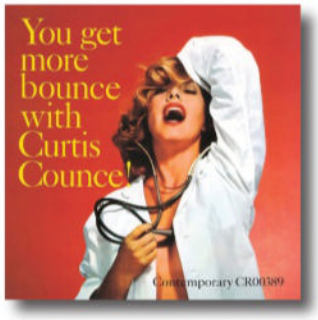
Modern Jazz Performances of songs from My Fair Lady
Shelly Manne drums
Contemporary-Craft Records



With all that I have said above about Shelly Manne, bassists Leroy Vinnegar and Red Mitchell, and Andre Previn, we now have a perfect opportunity to do a listening experiment. If you compare the aforementioned *West Side Story* record to this *My Fair Lady* record; what differences do you hear? What similarities do you hear? Don't allow yourself to fall into the trap of "better or worse." What *differences* do you hear? Only one musical piece has changed, and both of those pieces (Leroy Vinnegar and Red Mitchell) sound fantastic on each record, but how are they different? How does this slight change make Shelly and Andre play differently? As musicians, our ears are our biggest assets. The best musicians have the best ears, so why not start to train your ears to not just *hear*, but to *listen*. Put on some headphones and listen to each of these LP's back-to-back. They were made by all the same (but one) musicians, in the same room, only three years apart. What happened in those three years? And how was it reflected in the music that you are listening to? Don't just *listen*… *hear*!

Curtis Counce

You Get More Bounce with Curtis Counce Vol. 2
Frank Butler drums
Contemporary-Craft Records



Frank Butler is another one of those lesser known and lesser remembered jazz drummers, maybe it's because he was the drummer recording (on Miles' record *Seven Steps to Heaven*) with Miles Davis right before Tony Williams. But Butler did a lot besides get replaced by Tony Williams. With the Curtis Counce Band band (on Volume 1) Frank Butler made his first recording in the 50s. Like Butler, the Counce group was also band that has been a little forgotten in the sands of time. Maybe it's because they weren't "cool jazz," "chamber jazz," "be-bop," "hard-bop," or "avant-garde;" they were ALL of it. Hear their be-bop on "Big Foot," their hard bop on "Mean To Me," the experimentation on "Complete," and "Counceltation" and they are "cool" on "How Deep is the Ocean." Drummer Frank Butler and bassist Curtis Counce make all this music possible, with a crisp percolating beat, and deft sense of swing, and a large dose of creativity.

Phineas Newborn Jr.

A World of Piano
Philly Joe Jones, Louis Hayes drums
Contemporary-Craft Records

With *A World of Piano,* we have another opportunity to listen to and compare two of the giants of jazz drumming. Side one of this LP features the popular combination of bassist Paul Chambers and drummer Philly Joe Jones, and side two features another popular combination of bassist Sam Jones and drummer Louis Hayes. Both Philly Joe and Louis Hayes are legendary jazz drummers, but like us all, they have different approaches and different sounds. Take this opportunity to study, compare, and contrast both drummers. What do you like? What don't you like? This recording also includes five songs that every jazz drummer should know "Cheryl," "Manteca," "Lush Life," "Dahoud," and "Oleo." And this recording gives a good opportunity to hear some creative arrangements of these very popular tunes to play. "Dahoud" turns into a Philly Joe Jones feature, and he absolutely wears it out. It's classic Philly Joe. Louis Hayes gets more chances to accompany the unique pianist Newborn in creative ways, and he takes good advantage.

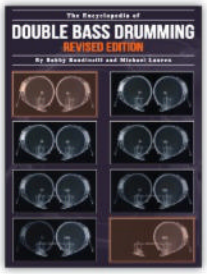
Leroy Vinnegar Sextet

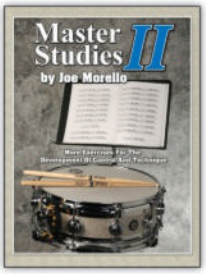
Leroy Walks!
Tony Bazley drums
Craft-Contemporary Records

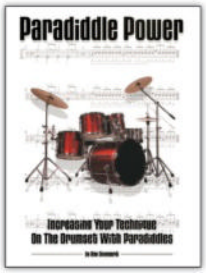
This is a classic recording that is adored by many jazz bassists, and there is a lot to be learned from that fact. Leroy Vinnegar's bass sound is natural and huge, and his pulse is just as big. Drummer Tony Bazley and Vinnegar are as tight as a hand in a glove, and the band benefits greatly from their tight hook-up. Jazz history is filled with drummers such as Tony Bazley, this is his first record. He is one of the great New Orleans drummers who recorded occasionally, but never received the respect that he demanded. His sound is New Orleans to the bone, you can hear it in his bass drum. Bazley studied early on with Earl Palmer and went on to play with Dexter Gordon, Wes Montgomery, and Les McCann. This is the perfect recording to listen to Tony Bazley. Check out his simple ideas on "The Sunny Side of the Street." His drumming is an important lesson that simplicity doesn't mean simple, and that more times than not, simplicity works… *well*!

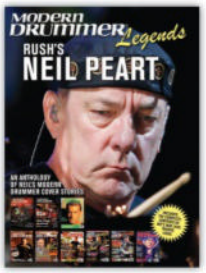
MODERN DRUMMER

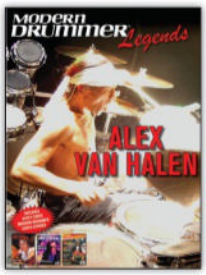
BEST SELLING DRUM TITLES WORLDWIDE

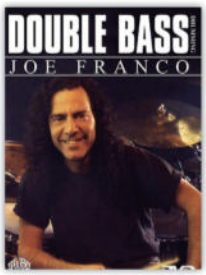


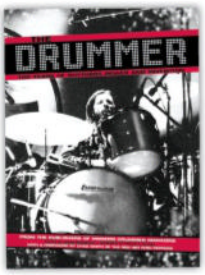


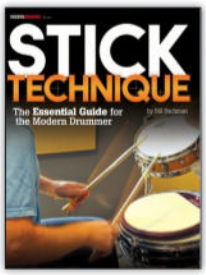


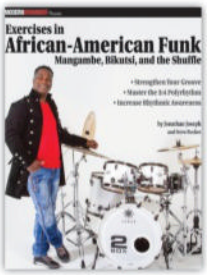


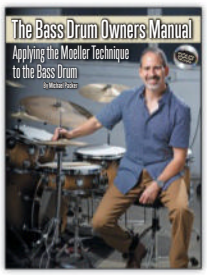


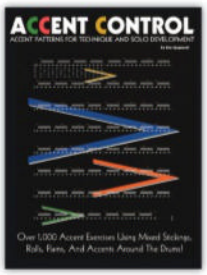


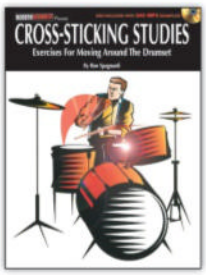


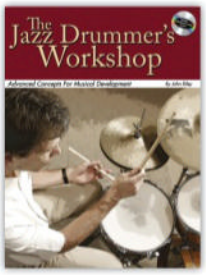


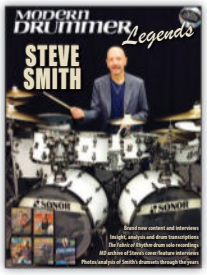


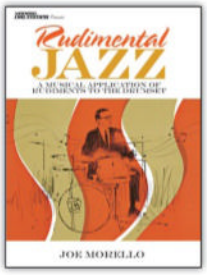


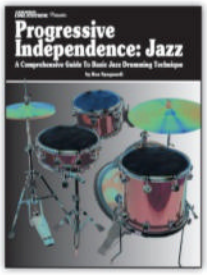


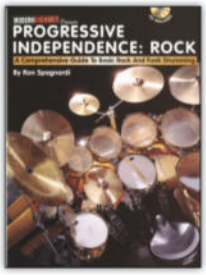


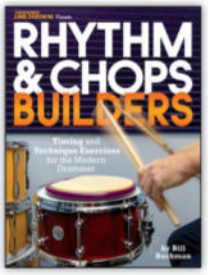


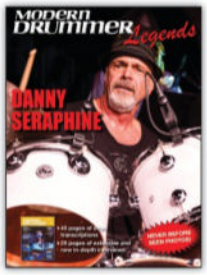


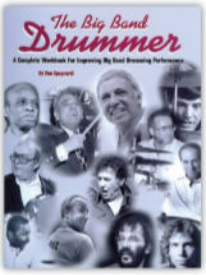












Available in print and digital format at **moderndrummer.com** or from your favorite music retailer

Hayley Brownell's Olivia Rodrigo Touring Kit

Photos by Jason Mehler

DRUMS: LUDWIG Vistalite Purple Drum set. Main Kit, 14x24 Bass Drum, 9x13 Tom, 16x16 Floor Tom, 16x18 Floor Tom. Along with Ludwig Universal Black Nickel Snare Drum 6.5x14 (Main) and Ludwig Raw Brass 8x14 (Side Snare). Satellite Kit 14x20 Purple Vistalite Bass Drum and a 6.5x14 Purple Vistalite Snare Drum with Big Fat Ring.
HEADS: REMO- Bass Drums Powerstroke 3 Purple Colortone on Batter and Resonant sides. Vintage Coated Emperors on all three snares, Ambassador snare side clear on bottoms. All toms use Clear Black Dot Emperor on top and Clear Ambassadors on bottom.
CYMBALS: TRX- MAIN KIT- X Series 20" Thunder Crash, TRX - LTD 15" top and bottom Hi-Hat, TRX Special Edition AX 19" Crash, 12" TRX BRT Lightning and 12" TRX DRK Thunder Hi-Hat Stack, Special Edition KX 21" Ride, Special Edition KX 20" crash. Satellite Kit- X series 13" Hi-Hat, X Series 20" Crash.
HARDWARE: LUDWIG- Speed Flyer pedals, Ludwig Atlas Pro Hi-Hat stand, Ludwig Atlas Pro Boom Cymbal stands and Snare stands. Satellite Kit- Ludwig Classic Hardware series stands.
ELECTRONICS: ROLAND- three PD-8's
PERCUSSION TABLE: LATIN PERCUSSION- Medium Twist shaker, Latin Percussion metal Shake it Shaker,
DRUMSTICKS: VATER - Los Angeles 5a's and VMT6 Felt Mallets
MICROPHONES: • Kick Inside- Shure Beta 91, Kick Outside- Earthworks DM6, Kick Outside- United FET47, Snare 1 Top A- Telefunken M80, Snare 1 Top B- Beyerdynamic M201, Snare 1 Bottom- AKG C414, Snare 2 Top- Telefunken M80SH, Snare 2 Bottom- Shure SM57, Hi-Hat- Earthworks SR25mp, Ride- Earthworks SR25mp, Kit/Crush Mic- Sennheiser MD441, Wide Overheads- Earthworks SR25MP's, Center Stereo Overhead- Vanguard V44S, Kick 2 Inside- Shure Beta 91, Kick 2 Outside- DPA4055, Snare 3 Top- Telefunken M80SH, Snare 3 Bottom- Shure SM57, Hi-Hat 2- Earthworks SR25mp.
IN EAR MONITORS: 64 AUDIO- Custom a12t

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